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625 Gazans killed since intifada
GAZA CITY (AFP) — A total 625 Gazans have been killed by Israelis since the beginning of the intifada, 140 of them since the start of the peace process in 1994, said a report issued Sunday for the ninth anniversary of the Palestinian uprising. The Gaza Centre for Rights and Law also said in the report that 61,582 Palestinians in Gaza had been injured by Israeli bullets or gas since Dec. 8, 1987, the start of the intifada. More than 5,000 Palestinians are in Israeli prisons, the report said, adding that 14 Palestinians have died in prison since 1987. The number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank during and after the intifada was not available. The intifada erupted after an Israeli car ran down four Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, sparking protests and giving birth to seven years of revolt against Israeli occupation in the territories, led by stone-throwing Palestinian children.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراية

AMMAN MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1996, RAJAB 28, 1417

Sarid urges Egypt to free alleged spy
CAIRO (AP) — An Israeli opposition leader appealed to Egypt on Sunday to free an Israeli detained on charges of espionage. Yossi Sarid, leader of the opposition Meretz Party and a former environment minister, said he believed Azam Azam was innocent. "From my own experience and knowledge in the work of the Israeli intelligence service, I don't believe that he has any connection with the Mossad," Mr. Sarid said. "It is not logical and I hope he will be freed as soon as possible." Mr. Sarid met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa on Sunday to press for Azam's release. Israeli officials and legislators have said that Azam is innocent and have appealed for his freedom. The case has raised tensions between the two countries at a time when relations are already strained over the slow pace of the Middle East peace process. Azam was arrested on Nov. 6 by Egyptian security agents in front of a Cairo hotel.

King expresses high satisfaction over talks with Sheikh Zayed

HM returns after visit to UAE, says bilateral ties at their best and as strong they could be

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein returned home Sunday after a two-day visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and described his talks with UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan as reaffirming the strong ties between the two countries. "Bilateral relations are at their best and as strong as they can be," said the King in remarks to Jordan Television. "Sheikh Zayed overwhelmed us with his care and generosity and I was very pleased to see him enjoying good health and again assuming his responsibilities with noble sentiments towards the Arab Nation and determined to work for the interest of the Arab World," added the King. "I wish the Gulf Cooperation Council summit to be crowned with success in every sense of the word," he said.



His Majesty King Hussein is received upon his return home on Sunday by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad (Petra photo)

Jordan, UAE want Iraq to take 'legal, political' steps to reassure world public opinion — Kabariti

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters
ABU DHABI — Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) want Iraq to abide by all U.N. Gulf war resolutions to help their efforts to ease sanctions imposed on Baghdad, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti said on Sunday. Mr. Kabariti, accompanying King Hussein on his first visit to the UAE since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, said both countries wanted Iraq to "take steps, legal and political, to reassure world public opinion" about its intentions. "There is an international political position that Iraq has to respond to... So far, we have not seen anything and the hoped for rehabilitation of Iraq has not succeeded," he told Reuters after talks between King Hussein and UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan. Rolf Ekeus, the U.N. envoy charged with eradicating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, was arrived in Baghdad later Sunday to try to persuade Iraq to allow the removal of destroyed missile engines for analysis abroad. Jordan and the UAE have made separate gestures towards Iraq after it recently accepted U.N. terms allowing it to sell oil worth \$2 billion to buy food and medicine. Both called for an easing of the suffering of the Iraqi people under U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. But Arab diplomats said both countries appeared frustrated over the lack of an Iraqi response to their gestures. "Iraq so far is not helping those who want to assist it by taking steps such as changing their confrontational political language," said one diplomat. "They need to present a new Iraqi point of view to assure the world of Iraq's post-sanctions role on all levels, political, military and economic." King Hussein met Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf on Friday, a day before he arrived in Abu Dhabi to crown a gradual improvement in ties since his perceived pro-Iraq stand in 1990 angered Gulf Arab states. It was the first such public high-level meeting with an Iraqi official following top Baghdad defections in August 1995 and Jordan allowed an Iraqi opposition group to open an office in Amman. Sheikh Zayed, worried by Iraq's international isolation and the growing power of Iran, recently renewed a call on fellow Gulf Arab states to heal the scars caused by the Gulf war. But the move sharpened differences with Kuwait, which has rejected such calls and is still bitter over Iraq's invasion. Mr. Kabariti said King Hussein and Sheikh Zayed stressed at their talks the need "to push forward the Middle East peace process and to continue efforts to pressure Iraq to change its (hardline) policies." He reiterated Jordan's support to the UAE in its territorial dispute with Iran over three Gulf islands.

Iraq reaffirms Aqaba's status as 2nd important port after Umm Qasr

Only Jordanian products and price and quality are main criteria — Saleh

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — Iraq on Sunday reaffirmed that Aqaba would be the second most important port after its own Umm Qasr in the Gulf for imports under Baghdad's oil-for-food deal with the United Nations but that prices and quality would determine whether Jordanian companies would get a good share of Iraqi import orders under the deal. Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh, addressing Jordanian businessmen, also said the decision to channel Iraqi imports under the deal with the U.N. through Aqaba after Umm Qasr was taken by President Saddam Hussein himself. He said that under the oil-for-food agreement Iraq was expected to receive about two million tonnes of cargo channelled through Umm Qasr and Aqaba. He did not give any definite figure for Aqaba's share. Mr. Saleh, paying his second visit to Jordan in one week, said the Iraqi government also wanted to give priority to Jordanian businesses for its import orders under the oil-for-food agreement, but that conditions attached to the accord stipulated that price and quality be the main criteria for orders. "We will not be buying anything through mediators in third countries," he said, explaining that "orders for French products will be placed directly with the French manufacturers and orders of Brazilian prod-

Palestinians press for time-table for further moves after Hebron

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The agreement on an Israeli troop withdrawal in Hebron is complete, but the signing is being delayed by a dispute with the Palestinians over a further Israeli withdrawal in the West Bank, Israel radio reported Sunday. However, Israeli army radio said Israel and the Palestinians still disagree over the security arrangements for the withdrawal in Hebron. The Palestinians are demanding a timetable for an Israeli withdrawal from rural areas in the West Bank, that was promised by the previous Israeli government in the interim agreements on Palestinian autonomy. Israel army radio reported that the demand, which came directly from Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) President Yasser Arafat, was delivered to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by the American Ambassador Martin Indyk. David Bar-Ilan, a top aide to the Israeli prime minister, said Mr. Arafat sent a message to Mr. Netanyahu that "contained many demands, most of which meant the reopening of all the agreements that have been reached by the negotiating teams of both sides." Mr. Bar-Ilan would not disclose the specific demands, other than to confirm that one concerned issues not connected with Israel's eight-month overdue troop withdrawal from most of Hebron. US diplomats have stepped up efforts to arrange an Arafat-Netanyahu summit to end the deadlock over the extension of self-rule to Hebron, but officials said that big differences remained. Officials said a meeting between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu was held up

Israel studies more settlements in heart of Arab East Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel is considering a plan to build homes for Jews in the heart of an Arab East Jerusalem neighbourhood, Israeli officials said on Sunday. The privately funded project has yet to receive final approval but a government official told Reuters the proposal was to go to the Jerusalem district planning commission on Sunday for the hearing of objections. If approved, the construction is sure to provoke an outcry internationally, particularly from Palestinians and Arab states. Israel's opening of an entrance to a tunnel near Muslim sites in Jerusalem in September touched off Israeli-Arab clashes that killed 85 people. Deputy Housing Minister Meir Porush, asked if the housing plan was wise given the strong reaction to the tunnel opening, said he was not worried. "I don't see any reason why Jews can't live in the Old City or in the east of the city. There is no reason not to... it can lead to coexistence," he told Israel radio. The radio said the plan called for the construction of 132 housing units for Jews in the Ras Al Amud neighbourhood of Arab East Jerusalem. Interior Minister Eliahu Suissa had linked approval of a plan for more housing units for Arabs in the neighbourhood to approval of the plan for Jewish housing there, the radio said. Opposition member of parliament Uzi Baram said the plan, which he blocked when he served as interior minister in Israel's previous centre-left government, was a prescription for trouble. "I'm completely against it because anything that is done by imposition... inside an Arab neighbourhood in order, ostensibly, to protect our control of Jerusalem and to support the unity of Jerusalem is a mistake," he said. "The hostility that preexists in my opinion will also cause a very complicated international problem for the Netanyahu government and it will also cause serious conflicts between the Jews and Arabs in that neighbourhood," he told Israel Radio. Palestinian officials, who have often said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's settlement policy could torpedo the Middle East peace process, were not immediately available to comment on the latest building plan. There are now some 160,000 Jews living in East Jerusalem, most in the neighbourhoods built for Jews since 1967, amidst some 155,000 Palestinians. All Israeli governments have built housing for Jews in the eastern part of the city since 1967. But the previous Labour government did not construct Jewish homes in the heart of existing Arab neighbourhoods. Six Jews arrested Six Jewish radicals tried to break into the Al Aqsa Mosque compound were arrested by Israeli police before they could breach the gates, police said. "Six members of Hai Ve Kayam tried to go into the (Harim Al Sharif complex), but they were detained by police," police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Rubi said. "This is a regular thing, it happens once a week at least." The militants' action at Al Aqsa coincided with the holy day of Isaac Wal Miraj which marks the Prophet Muhammad's ascent to heaven. It also came on the third day of the

Ekeus in Baghdad in bid to resolve dispute over Scuds

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — U.N. disarmament chief Rolf Ekeus began a mission here Sunday to urge the Iraqi authorities to stop preventing his inspectors from removing banned Scud missile parts. Mr. Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), arrived in Baghdad for talks with Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz and other Iraqi officials after taking a special flight from Bahrain. U.N. sources said. His talks were to start later Sunday, they said. U.S. officials warned Iraq Friday that Washington would respond "firmly" to any provocation, but said they would not prevent Iraq from resuming its first oil exports in six years under a humanitarian deal with the United Nations. Iraqi authorities last month blocked the transfer

Opposition decries Israeli participation in exhibition

AMMAN (J.T.) — Ten opposition political parties on Sunday reacted strongly against a report that Israel would be among 20 countries taking part in a two-day exhibition of sophisticated equipment and weapons opening in Amman on Monday. "At a time when the Zionist enemy is showing arrogance, maintaining occupation of Arab territories, pursuing aggressive and expansionist policies and at a time when the (Islamic) nation is celebrating Al Israa Wal Miraj feast we hear reports that three Israeli firms will be among the countries exhibiting weapons," said a statement by the group. "We see in this development a normalisation of relations with the enemy and a penetration of the nation and exploitation of Jordan as a bridge for Zionist firms to enter the Arab and Islamic Worlds. We see in it a stab in the back of the Palestinian people and their steadfastness at a time when they suffer from blockades, starvation and daily acts of terrorism at the hands of the Zionist terrorists led by the Likud Party," said the statement. "The opposition parties warn the government against the consequences of normalisation... policies which are carried out at the expense of the Arab Nation, and they call on all the forces that oppose normalisation and the popular organisations to exercise their role and to stand firm against the continued normalisation (with Israel) which is pursued by the government and to boycott any activity in which the Zionist enemy is participating," concluded the statement. The exhibition, organised by the U.K.-based Contingency and Operational Procurement Exhibition (COPEX) under the aegis of the Jordanian Special Forces commanded by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, will be held at the Amman International Motor Show. On display will be surveillance equipment to suit most situations, rough terrain vehicles and light weapons for use by the military, police, customs and border guards, according to the organisers.

(Continued on page 71)

(Continued on page 7)

Israel: U.S. holding back Iran nuclear data to spare Russia

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has accused the United States of holding back intelligence information on Russian aid to Iran's nuclear programme for fear of damaging relations with Moscow, the Haaretz newspaper reported Sunday.

The independent daily quoted a senior Israeli official who said he made the accusation during a regular meeting of the joint U.S.-Israeli political-military committee last week in Annapolis, Maryland.

"We know that the Russians are helping the Iranians build nuclear cores and arm them," the official was quoted as saying, charging that in the past U.S. intelligence provided such information to its Israeli counterparts but that this collaboration had been halted by Washington.

"We know what the Russians are doing, and your intelligence also knows, but the cooperation has been stopped," the official said he told his American counterparts last week.

"When we tried to clarify what had happened, it turned out that there had been political pressure in Washington due to fear of harming relations with the Russian government of (President Boris) Yeltsin," the official told the newspaper.

He said the administration of President Bill Clinton was wary about disseminating information about nuclear deals between Moscow and Tehran out of concern that the

U.S. Congress could react by enacting measures that would harm U.S.-Russian aid and trade.

U.S. officials at the Annapolis meeting denied that any decision had been made to cut Israel out of the intelligence loop concerning Iran's nuclear programme, but the Israeli official was adamant there had been a change of policy.

The Americans stressed that they had no intention of changing their "aggressive" diplomacy concerning Iran, notably because of its suspected involvement in terror attacks against U.S. targets.

Israel has accused Iran of using nuclear technology supplied by Russia to develop atomic weapons and claimed it was on target to develop nuclear warheads by the year 2000.

Haaretz said differences also arose between the Israeli and U.S. sides last week over assessments of the situation in Syria.

The Israelis said Syrian President Hafez Al Assad had ordered his army to prepare for a possible attack on Israel if peace negotiations between the sides remain frozen over Israel's refusal to give up the occupied Golan Heights.

The U.S. officials disagreed, saying there was no danger of military conflict in the short-term between Israel and Syria, the Israeli official said.



WOUNDED SOLDIER: An Israeli soldier wounded in South Lebanon is treated while being evacuated to an Israeli hospital for treatment on Saturday. Hizbollah guerrillas set off a roadside bomb and fired Sagger missiles, killing one Israeli soldier and wounding two in the bloodiest attack on Israeli forces in South Lebanon in nearly a month (Reuters photo)

Bahrain accuses Gulf partners of indifference

MANAMA (AFP) — Bahrain, which is boycotting a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in the Qatari capital, on Sunday accused its Gulf neighbours of indifference towards Qatar's "treachery and deception."

"Bahrain's loyalty to the GCC has always run up against Qatar's ulterior motives and the indifference of other (Gulf) members," said the Al Ayyam newspaper, which reflects the official view.

"The voice of wise (Bahrain) which has lost patience, the voice of the one who suffered from Qatar's treachery and deception (GCC) brothers" cannot keep quiet any longer, the paper said.

The daily blasted other Gulf members for their "indifference, during Qatar's armed attack against Fashit Al Dibbel in 1986" when between 100 and 150 Qatari soldiers landed on the island to stop construction of a Bahraini guard post.

"Bahrain hoped then for a solution from within the GCC but the latter turned its back, behaved indifferently and submitted to the logic of force," the paper said.

Bahrain is boycotting the Doha summit because of disputes with Qatar over the Hawar and Fasht Al Dibbel islands which Bahrain controls and Doha claims as its own.

Manama accused Qatar of profiting from the GCC summit in Doha in 1990 to force it to accept a resolution calling for the case to be taken to the International

Court of Justice at the Hague if no solution was found.

Bahrain's official television on Saturday accused the Qatari government of provoking squabbles and of acting irresponsibly within the GCC.

"The government of Qatar is provoking marginal quarrels and committing irresponsible actions in its relations with the GCC countries," a Bahraini television commentator said.

The television commentator also attributed to Doha "responsibility for the implication of the two Qatars accused of spying."

Bahrain on Monday announced the arrest of Fashit Al Dibbel, 28, described as a Qatari intelligence officer, and Salwa Jassim Mahmoud Fakhr, 33, a Qatari woman he allegedly recruited as a spy.

The two appeared on Wednesday before the state security court, which adjourned the hearing to Dec. 14. They could face the death penalty if found guilty.

Qatar's Interior Ministry has accused the Bahraini authorities of using torture to extract confessions, saying that any verdict would be "null and void."

However, Hamad Al Bakker, the father of one of the suspects, appeared on Bahraini television on Saturday and said he had seen his son, who is in police custody.

"He is in good health," Mr. Bakker said in a statement recorded on Wednesday. "I wish to thank the government of Bahrain for taking good care of him."

Suspect in Lebanon graft case reportedly murdered

BEIRUT (AP) — A key suspect in a much-publicised case of graft in the finance ministry has been killed in a gruesome crime, Lebanese Prosecutor-General Adnan Addoum said Saturday.

"According to confessions made by accomplices (in the case), Raafat Suleiman was shot dead two and a half months ago," Mr. Addoum told the Associated Press.

Newspaper reports published Saturday said he was killed by accomplices after a dispute over sharing embezzled money.

The case has underlined the corruption which has long plagued Lebanon's civil service and angered ordinary Lebanese burdened with rising taxes and duties imposed by the finance ministry.

Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has the finance portfolio.

State Minister for Finance Fuad Saniora, who runs the ministry's day-to-day affairs, said last month that money involved in the case amounted to four billion pounds (\$2.5 million).

Suleiman's body has yet to be found and Mr. Addoum — the prosecutor-general — said his body is believed to have been buried in a village 21 kilometres north of Beirut.

Suleiman, 47, a finance ministry treasurer, has been missing since Sept. 25. He and Farid Moussali, a 38-year-old Palestinian killed last month, are suspected of involvement in the alleged embezzlement of millions

of dollars by passing forged fiscal stamps through the finance ministry's bureaucracy and pocketing the money.

"Fiscal stamps are extensively used in Lebanon for a wide variety of transactions involving government departments."

Moussali was killed last month in a shootout with security agents while trying to arrest him, according to police accounts.

The prosecutor-general said confessions by one of Suleiman's alleged killers helped in uncovering the crime.

Mohammad Harmouch, a Syrian citizen arrested last month in connection with the embezzlement case, confessed Friday night to his role in Suleiman's killing, he said without giving details.

Harmouch and Antoine Tayyar, a finance ministry employee arrested in connection with the case, lured Suleiman to Jounieh on Sept. 25 where they shot him dead, Mr. Addoum was quoted as saying Saturday by the independent newspaper Al Nahar.

It said they later cut his body into pieces and doused acid on the body before burying the remains.

The conservative Al Diyar newspaper Saturday quoted Mr. Addoum as saying that Suleiman's killing was triggered by a dispute among the four — Suleiman, Moussali, Harmouch and Tayyar — over the sale of forged tax stamps.

Official says 5 killed in Iran unrest

BAKHTARAN (AP) — Five people were killed and several others wounded in clashes last week over the death of a Sunni Muslim religious leader, a senior security official in this western city said Sunday.

The official, who did not want to be identified, told the Associated Press that three rioters and a security officer were killed in clashes in the city of Bakhtaran, 450 kilometres southwest of the Iranian capital, Tehran.

Hundreds of protesters also clashed with security police in the towns of Ravansar and Javanrud, both within 70 kilometres northwest of Bakhtaran, the official said.

One protester also was killed in Ravansar, he said. The official would not say how many were wounded in the Wednesday and Thursday unrest, sparked by the death of Mullah Mohammad Rabi, but added that 40 people had been arrested.

Officials have said Rabi, 64, had died of a heart attack, but his supporters claimed that he was killed by government agents.

On Sunday, life returned to normal in Javanrud, the troubled district in Bakhtaran where thousands went rampaging after hearing rumours that Rabi had been assassinated.

Armed riot police in full battle gear patrolled the neighbourhood early Saturday, but by Sunday only a few policemen armed only with batons kept watch over the district.

Protesters went on a wrecking spree, breaking shop windows and destroying cars Wednesday, after clashing with police earlier in the day.

Witnesses said Hojatoleslam Zandi, the Friday prayer leader in the province, was on his way to attend a mourning ceremony for Rabi when shots were fired at him from among the crowd gathered to mourn the Sunni leader.

A police officer, Colonel Ali Akbar Najafi, opened fire with a handgun to defend the cleric, Najafi and three people in the crowd were killed in the ensuing melee, the official said.

The security official blamed the riots on "anti-revolutionary elements," the term usually used to refer to agents of the outlawed Iranian opposition group, the Mujahedeen-Khalq, which is based across the border in Iraq.

He confirmed accounts by several witnesses who said they recognised no religious leaders among the protesters, indicating the riots may have been instigated.

The Mujahedeen have reported the clashes, but have not taken responsibility for starting the unrest. Kurdish rebels fighting the Iranian government for a homeland from bases in Iraq also are active in border regions like the province of Bakhtaran, whose capital city has the same name.

Foul play in Iranian writer's death — PEN

NEW YORK (AFP) — Deceased Iranian writer Ghaffar Hosseini was the victim of foul play, and missing Iranian editor Farraj Sarkoobi may have been arrested by Iranian intelligence, PEN reported Saturday.

Both men had signed the "1994 Declaration of 134 Iranian Writers" calling for "an end to all censorship of literary endeavour in Iran" and were arrested and held briefly on Sept. 8, 1996.

Hosseini, who was found dead in his apartment Nov. 11, and whose death Iranian officials had blamed on a

heart attack, "was in fact the victim of foul play," Poets, Playwrights Editors Essayists and Novelists (PEN) said in a statement.

The New York-based PEN American centre said it had received reports that Hosseini's body was covered with bruises and he had bled heavily from his mouth.

PEN also said Hosseini had no history of heart trouble, and that while the burial report said he died of "heart or cardiac ischemia," the coroner has said he would not make the official report public for several weeks.

The organisation reported that Farraj Sarkoobi, who was supposed to fly to Germany Nov. 3 but never arrived, "was last seen with an Iranian government official in the Tehran airport."

Sarkoobi reportedly met an Iranian intelligence official who had promised to help him leave the country "at the money exchange booth of the Tehran airport" and "has not been seen since," according to PEN.

PEN said it had received a report, which it could not confirm, that Sarkoobi was seen at Iranian intelligence headquarters.

Bahrain court gives suspended terms to 8 women

MANAMA (Agencies) — Bahrain's state security court has sentenced eight women to three-month suspended prison terms in the first reported ruling against women in two years of sporadic civil unrest, newspapers said on Sunday.

The Bahraini women were found guilty of attending a gathering aimed at "destabilising Bahrain's security," they added.

The women had attended a protest at their school, an official said.

The court found them guilty of "inciting violence" during the protest, the official said on condition he not be named.

The court, whose rulings

cannot be appealed, also condemned a young man to three years in prison for "being involved in an organisation seeking to use violence to overthrow Bahrain's political system," the official added.

In June, the government accused Iran of trying to overthrow it by arming and financing a group called Hizbollah-Bahrain and said the group included a special section for women.

Riots, firebombings and other attacks have shaken Bahrain since unrest erupted in December 1994 after the arrest of a Shiite Muslim cleric, Sheikh Ali Salman, who now lives in exile in London.

At least 25 people have

been killed in the unrest which is led mainly by Shiite Muslims who want the Sunni-Muslim led government to restore the parliament suspended in 1975.

The government, seeking to speed up judgements, ordered the court in March to try hundreds of detainees held for street protests, sabotage and arson attacks. It has sentenced about 170 people.

At least 27 people, including three policemen and seven Bangladeshi workers, have been killed since the outbreak of the unrest.

Bahrain has announced the execution of one person.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

- 14:05Muppet Show
- 14:30Comedy — Dad's Army
- 15:00 Doc. — Nature's Inventions
- 16:30Comedy — Hey Dad
- 17:00News Flash
- 17:01Destiny Ridge
- 18:00 Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq
- 19:00Le Journal
- 19:15Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq
- 19:30News Headlines
- 19:35Roseanne
- 20:00 Documentary — Disaster Chronicle
- 20:30Cinema, Cinema
- 21:10The Lazarus Man
- 22:00News in English
- 22:25Best Seller — Family Pictures (pt. 1)
- 23:15 Police drama — TheKnock

PRAYER TIMES

- 04:56Fajr
- 06:18Sunrise Duha
- 11:27Dhuhr
- 14:13Asr
- 16:36Maghreb
- 17:58Isha

CHURCHES

- St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swefieh. Tel. 810740
- Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
- St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 623466

Anglican Church Tel. 628286

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology Rainfall is expected in the northern and eastern parts of the Kingdom, with skies cloudy to partly cloudy and winds northwesterly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. Amman08/16

Aqaba11/22

Deserts06/19

Jordan Valley12/23

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 17, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 65 per cent, Aqaba 52 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

- AMMAN: Dr. Yousef Rashid896301
- Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab758848
- Dr. Khalil Jhali740740
- Dr. Walid Al Masri675485
- Ferdows pharmacy778336
- Al Asema pharmacy637055
- Natroukh pharmacy623672
- Al Salam pharmacy636730
- Yacoub pharmacy64945
- Shmeisani pharmacy637660
- Natroukh pharmacy847632
- IRBID: Dr. Ahmad Qasbi281484
- Al Quds pharmacy(—)
- ZARQA: Dr. Walid Halaseh982799
- Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

- Food Control Centre637111
- Civil Defence Department661111
- Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police92.62111.637777

Fire Brigade617101

Black Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Dept.630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water & Sewage Complaints897467

Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information Directory assistance121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone623101

Repairs661101

Abdali Tel. Repairs773111

Jordan Television774111

Radio Jordan680100

Water Authority815615

J. Electricity Authority626381

Electric Power Co.532303

RJ Flight Information08-532300

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-532300

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre81381332

Khalidi Maternity642816

Akileh Maternity642412

Jabal Amman Maternity642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani607071

Shmeisani Hospital669131

University Hospital845845

Al-Muasher Hospital6622279

The Islamic, Abdali66612637

Al-Abili, Abdali6661646

Italian, Al-Muhajreen7771013

Al-Bashir77511126

Army, Marka89161315

Queen Alia Hospital60224050

Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199

ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital09983323

Zarqa National Hospital09980560

Ibn Sina Hospital09986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital09990990

IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital021275555

Princess Haya Hospital02127275

Greek Catholic Hospital02127275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital021247100

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital03314101

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel.

01:20 Amsterdam, Damascus (KL)

05:05London (KJ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:20Marka Airport (from QAIA) (RW)

20:50Aqaba (RW)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15Sanaa (RJ)

08:35Jeddah (RJ)

08:55Damascus (RJ)

09:45New Delhi (RJ)

10:05Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:25Beirut (RJ)

16:25Cairo (RJ)

16:45London (RJ)

17:00New Delhi (add) (RJ)

21:20Bangkok, Singapore (RJ)

22:15Casablanca (RJ)

03:15Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

03:40Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

04:30Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

05:00Khartoum (SD)

09:30Cairo (MS)

12:00Doha (Q7)

King donates carpets to Dome of the Rock

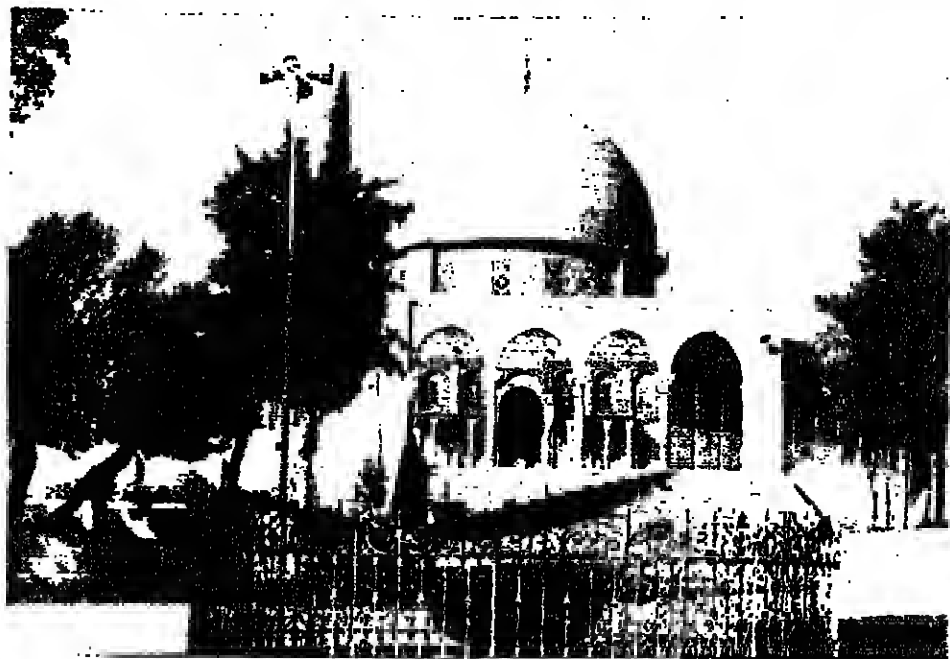
Carpets leave Jordan on commemorative day of Al Israa Wal Miraj feast

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi Monday announced that His Majesty King Hussein has donated Turkish wool carpets, whose total worth is estimated at JD 150,000, and that the gift has been loaded in trucks headed for Jerusalem.

The carpets will be spread on the floor of the Dome of the Rock, located inside the Al Haram Al Sharif compound, he said.

Dr. Abbadi, who is also chairman of a Jordanian committee for the restoration and refurbishing of Al Haram Al Sharif, told Jordan Television that last year the King ordered that the carpets be finely specified to the dimensions of the holy shrines.

He said that the carpet transport left on the commemorative day of the Al Israa Wal Miraj feast as a further manifestation of King Hussein's determination to serve and protect the holy shrines in Jerusalem.



The Dome of the Rock (file photo)

The Jerusalem shrine is the third most sacred site for Muslims after those in Mecca and Medina.

King Hussein has heretofore donated more than \$8 million from his own pocket

towards the restoration of the Dome of the Rock and towards repairs for Al Aqsa Mosque which was set afire in 1968 by a visiting Australian.

Two senior officials from

the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Rafiq Khatib and Walid Ahweini were designated to deliver the carpets to the holy city.

Ministry declares certain jobs as off-limits to foreigners

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Labour Sunday announced that, as of 1997, hair-dressing will be an occupation closed to non-Jordanians.

The announcement was made by Employment Director at the Ministry of Labour Bahjat Qteishat who named other occupations closed to foreigners as: engineering, accounting, medical professions, telephone operators, night watchmen, teaching and car and electricity maintenance.

Mr. Qteishat said that the Ministry of Labour is determined to implement government decisions taken last June, whereby a foreign worker must obtain a work permit endorsed by the ministry in Amman, prior to arrival to the country.

He stated that employers of foreign labourers have been requested to submit an

application to the Ministry of Labour in order to employ non-Jordanians in the Kingdom and the ministry has further stipulated that Egyptian workers may arrive only after receiving ministry approval through the Jordanian embassy in Cairo and the Egyptian embassy in Amman.

These measures have benefited Jordanian job seekers, Mr. Qteishat said, adding that the ministry has succeeded in improving working conditions by fixing an official minimum wage and by ensuring Social Security Corporation (SSC) coverage.

Furthermore, in the past 11 months employment offices have found work for 8,260 unemployed citizens, he said.

Recently, Mr. Qteishat affirmed that the employment office in Amman reached an agreement with the Amman Municipality

regarding wage increases for cleaners to reach a monthly JD 130 and has subsequently attracted 200 national workers to the occupation.

Mr. Qteishat called on Jordanian job seekers to register their names and qualifications with his office which, he maintained, would help them find jobs.

Unemployment, he stated, results from guest workers who accept lower wages and also due to the low wages offered Jordanians for long work hours.

Recent statistics have demonstrated that 17 per cent of the total potential workforce is unemployed and that between 300,000 and 350,000 non-Jordanians are working in the Kingdom, many without valid work permits.

Mr. Qteishat said that the Ministry of Labour is eager to replace guest workers

with Jordanians and is continuing to mandate inspection teams to various businesses, factories and other organisations to ensure adherence to ministry regulations.

He said that the Ministry of Labour is determined to order guest workers to leave the country if they are found to be violating the ministry's regulations.

In presenting the 1997 fiscal budget draft to Parliament last Wednesday Minister of Finance Marwan Awad said that unemployment now stands at 13 per cent down from last year's figure of 15 per cent.

He attributed the decrease to the opening of foreign labour markets to Jordanians as well as the government's new policies regarding the national labour market.



In Amman, a young man links his home computer to Jordan's first online service by the General Intelligence Department (GID). The service, launched its first Internet home page, and an e-mail address to anyone who wants to log-on, the first project of its kind in the Arab World (Reuters photo)

Jordan slated to receive immediate agricultural aid

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will be one of six Arab countries to benefit from immediate aid from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as the organisation has decided to allocate \$450 million in help developing nations in 1997. Ministry of Agriculture's Secretary General Ghaleb Abu Orabi announced Monday.

Speaking upon his return to Amman after attending the executive council meeting in Rome, Mr. Abu Orabi said that the council resolved to contribute to the actualisation of 22 development programmes in the Third World.

The other five countries, slated to benefit from this aid, are Libya, Syria, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco all of which, according to Mr. Abu Orabi, are comprised of semi-arid regions with low

rainfall rates and, therefore, they will be entitled to funds and modern technology to help ensure more abundant harvests for their citizens.

He explained that these funds will finance projects to help smaller-sized farms increase output and reclaim lands, thereby attracting more workers and so contribute to curtailing unemployment and stemming migrations from rural to urban regions.

The IFAD Executive Council also decided to continue with plans to help those countries involved in the so-called Mashreq and Maghreb Land Development Projects which are designed to increase cereal production and create pasture in order to increase livestock wealth.

These projects are being implemented in the designated countries through the Aleppo-based

International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).

The council has endorsed a general 1997 projects blueprint and stated that it would particularly focus on countries currently in the process of implementing economic reform programmes, Mr. Abu Orabi added.

He said that the council also endorsed a strategy designed to ensure increased revenues and contributions to the organisation as well as creating a network for the transferring of modern technology to developing countries.

Mr. Abu Orabi described one of the projects as financing a research programme to protect Saudi Arabian palm trees as well as those in the United Arab Emirates.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince to chair ophthalmology conference

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain HRH Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid today is chairing a meeting for the board of directors of the Arab Council on Ophthalmology to discuss preparations for the fourth international ophthalmology conference, due to be held in Amman in May.

Meeting to cover endangered species

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Ruzzaq Tubaishat today opened a three-day regional conference on nature conservation in Asia and the Middle East. The conference has been organised by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in cooperation with the Secretariat of the International Agreement on Trafficking in Endangered Species. Taking part in the conference are representatives from the 135 countries which signed the agreement as well as representatives of 30 non-signatory countries, including Bahrain, Oman and Lebanon.

Jordan to take part in Morocco seminar

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in a four-day conference for national cultural institutions in the Arab World, slated to be held in Morocco on Dec. 12. President of the Jordanian Writers Union Hani Amad, who will be heading the Kingdom's delegation to the conference, stated that the conference aims to initiate dialogue between Arab cultural institutions in order to reach an acceptable formula for a pan-Arab cultural forum and a common plan of action, geared to boost Arab cultural work. The conference has been organised by the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ALESCO).

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Petra Region Planning Council needs the following:

1. Director of Environmental Management Unit.
* Msc or PhD in environmental engineering with not less than 10 years practical experience in environmental project management & assessment.
2. Director of Planning and Development Control Unit.
* Msc or PhD in Urban/town planning with not less than 10 years practical experience in planning and development control or local government planning.
3. Director of Project Implementation Unit.
* Msc or PhD in Civil engineering/Structural engineering with not less than 10 years practical experience in project management & supervision.
4. Director of Tourism Development Unit.
* Msc or PhD in Tourism development, marketing or tourism economy with not less than 10 years practical experience in tourism management or marketing with knowledge in new project development & dealing with the private sector.

All Candidates:

1. To be fluent in English (reading, writing, speaking).
 2. Strong executive and managerial skills.
 3. Ability to work effectively with management-level personnel and technical staff at national, regional, and local government agencies.
 4. Demonstrated aptitude in Word-processing and computer data-base management.
 5. Jordanian
 6. CV with copies of qualifications to be provided to the World Bank Unit in Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities on Monday 9-12-1996 at 12 a.m.
 7. Interviews with candidates will be held in Ministry of Tourism on Wednesday 11-12-1996 at 10 a.m.
- Note: Vary attractive salary.
Dr. Sateh Rushaidat
Minister of Tourism & Antiquities
President of Petra Region Planning Council

Expanded facility completed for issuance of driver's licences

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An expanded facility where drivers can obtain licences was officially inaugurated Saturday in West Amman in a bid to accelerate the licensing process.

The facility, located at the Royal Automobile Club (RAC) in the Seventh Circle neighbourhood, will also attempt to alleviate the load of drivers waiting to obtain new licences at the Marka Traffic Department.

The Drivers and Vehicles Licensing Department had operated a small office at the RAC since 1987 primarily to renew driver's licences. The office was located in a one-floor building

which the department shares with the RAC's driver education school.

"That office became too small to accommodate the increasing numbers of drivers," Director of the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Department at the Public Security Department (PSD) Colonel Mustafa Freihat said.

A new floor, with costs totalling JD 100,000 and paid for by the RAC, was added to the building to provide the much needed service, according to RAC Director Samir Jarar.

According to Col. Freihat, the department's staff at the new office will be better able to accommodate the 270 to 310 new drivers who appear daily to take

their driving exam.

In addition, the PSD official maintained, there are [now] comfortable waiting areas for drivers going through the licensing process.

Col. Freihat said that next year the West Amman branch will start offering computerised magnetic strip driver's licences.

He said that the PSD has also extended hours to serve working citizens who are unable to attend the exams during regular schedule hours.

The new schedule is as follows: regular hours will be from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday and Sunday, and in the summer these times will be extended to 6:00 p.m. on the same days.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM
* "Andre Marlaux ou la Grande Vie" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh at 8:30 p.m.

CONCERT
* Musical performance by Wasim Faris and Ziyad Al Awwi at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS SHOW
* "Special show and sale of Christmas crafts at the Jordan Crafts Centre (Alaydi), Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 644555), until Dec. 31.

DISCUSSION
* Roundtable discussion with the press entitled "Judicial and Legal Guarantees for Human Rights" with the participation of Dr. Nathan Brown at the American Centre, Abdoun on Monday, Dec. 9 (10:00 a.m. — 12:00 noon).

LECTURE
* Lecture on the art of Fahreissa Zeid and Rula Shukairy by critic Kifah al-Habib at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS
* Display of Christmas gift items at the Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman (Tel. 658696/7) until Dec. 24.

* Paintings and wall sculpture by American artist Susanna Caldwell at Al Baydar, Khirbet Abu Jaber (Tel. 737556), until Dec. 14.

* Plastic art week activities at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Dec. 12.
* Works on the life of Andis Marlaux at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 24.

NIC presents 'Intranet'

Maysa Ibrahim
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The National Information Centre (NIC) has succeeded in setting up a national "Intranet", the first of its kind in Jordan, according to Director General Yousef Nusseir.

Based on Internet technology, the NIC intranet links up public sector organisations in Jordan to one another. Its website is accessed through individual computer terminals and guides the user through specialised subnetworks, which in turn provide data and refer alternate sources of information.

Set up in 1993 to address difficulties in accessing information in the Kingdom, the NIC was established to coordinate information in Jordan. It currently links information centres, facilitating an easy exchange of information, eliminating repetition and contradiction and standardising methods of information retrieval, Dr. Nusseir said.

He described the NIC staff approach as cooperative, "working with 150 related sources of information, collating data rather than imposing our views."

Two years after the establishment of the NIC, subnetworks on economic, industrial and labour-oriented information are presently operating.

By way of illustration, the economic page will include information from the Ministries of Planning, Finance, Trade and Industry, as well as the Public Statistics Department, Investment Promotion Corporation, Jordan Export Development Corporation and the Customs Department.

Geographic and agricultural information subnetworks are currently being implemented and the system is being devised to include an Arabic option alongside the English standard. Forty organisations have subscribed to the service and future plans include expansion into the private sector.

The NIC represented Jordan at the European Union (EU)-organised International Conference on Information Society and Development in South Africa in June and participated in information technology network workshops in Cairo as well as the European-Middle Eastern Conference in Informatics and Information Networks held in France.

The NIC and Jordanian information specialists conducted seminars in June with experts from France, Canada, the USA, the World Bank and UNESCO to discuss the draft for the National Information Policy as well as national seminars and workshops.

Dr. Nusseir quoted the World Bank as saying, whilst at the June NIC seminar, that the NIC intranet was the most progressive and fastest established of its kind in the Middle East.

The National Orthodox School

is in need of the following:

- 1- A GCE teacher for English language and literature grades 9 and 10.
 - 2- An English teacher for grade 8.
 - 3- An English teacher for grade 11.
- Teachers should be holder of minimum BA. degree, 3 years experience and should be fluent in English. Teachers are expected to start work in the second semester 1996-97.
- Please call: 666416, 704241, 668974.
for appointment between 8-12,
Monday Dec. 9 through Thursday Dec. 12.

sisley
PARIS

On the occasion of the visit of
Mme Bentoumi
Sisley Beauty Consultant from Paris, France

Qweider Trading Establishment
has the pleasure to announce a special Sisley promotion
December 7th until December 12th

Please call for an appointment
QWEIDER TRADING EST.
Shmeisani, Telephone 689259 / 693049

Serbian opposition vows new anti-Milosevic drive

BELGRADE (R) — Serbia's opposition Sunday vowed a campaign of street demonstrations to drive President Slobodan Milosevic from power after the Supreme Court rejected its appeal against Socialist election rigging.

The decision set Mr. Milosevic and his ruling Socialists on a course of confrontation with the Zajedno (Together) Coalition of opposition parties, which has mounted three weeks of huge demonstrations, and its U.S.-led supporters in the West.

Zajedno leader Vuk Draskovic told reporters that peaceful protests would continue until Mr. Milosevic resigned, but he feared the authorities might quickly resort to force.

"I am expecting tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, that Mr. Milosevic will use police, maybe even the army, but we will not stop," he added.

The authorities have held

the police in reserve during daily street protests attracting up to 150,000 people and Mr. Milosevic told U.S. media rights worker Kati Marton as the court sat that he would not use either police or troops.

But opposition sources feared the mood could be ugly when demonstrators, their hopes of victory dashed, gathered for another demonstration in Belgrade Sunday.

Zajedno leaders have constantly expressed concern that police provocateurs among the marchers could cause trouble and give Mr. Milosevic an excuse to use his riot police.

He used tanks to crush the last night, Milosevic is no longer the head of state, he is the head of state terrorism."

Mr. Draskovic accused Mr. Milosevic of ordering the Supreme Court to reject Zajedno appeals for the return of Belgrade City Council seats it won in the Nov. 17 elections.

The seats were turned over to the Socialists after they accused the opposition of unexplained "irregularities" in the vote in which Zajedno captured 60 of the 110 seats.

Zajedno officials said they were told by the court that it ruled against every opposition appeal and confirmed Socialist control of Belgrade.

Five of the 36 Supreme Court judges publicly protested last month against the authorities' involvement of the judiciary in the settlement of a political conflict.

"We are expecting a strong reaction from the west to this state terrorism," Mr. Draskovic said. "From last night, Milosevic is no longer the head of state, he is the head of state terrorism."

Mr. Milosevic agreed to the court review under heavy pressure from the United States and west European governments which demanded recognition of Zajed-

no's victory.

Zajedno claimed it won in Belgrade and 14 large towns in the biggest setback to Socialist rule in Serbia for 50 years.

The annulment of the opposition victories drew sharp criticism from the West, which has piled pressure on Mr. Milosevic to respect democracy.

The court's ruling came after signs Mr. Milosevic might be distancing himself from Socialist Party officials identified with vote rigging.

Radio B-92 reported that student Dejan Bulatovic was in a serious condition after being beaten by police after being arrested for carrying an effigy of Mr. Milosevic in prison garb during Saturday's demonstration.

Opposition lawyers said Mr. Bulatovic was refused medical treatment for "serious chest and head injuries."



Belgrade students throw pro-government newspapers into the air in front of the state agency Tanjug in Belgrade Saturday. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, facing unprecedented street protests and mounting international criticism, struggled to disengage himself Saturday from opposition charges of election-rigging (Reuters photo)

Isolated student protest held outside Rangoon university

RANGOON (AFP) — Two hundred Burmese students staged a brief demonstration outside Rangoon's main university campus Sunday, maintaining their right to set up a union, witnesses said.

It began at 9:00 a.m. (0230 GMT), with students chanting pro-democracy slogans and singing the national anthem and student songs for about 30 minutes.

More than 100 soldiers marched to the scene, but it ended peacefully soon after, with the protesters returning on foot back inside their campus.

It appeared to be an isolated protest, with no students from other campuses apparently taking part.

Early Saturday, 264 people had been picked up when police broke up a sit-down student rights protest with representatives from different universities, in the city at a major traffic intersection about 50 metres from the gate of the main campus.

Authorities said Saturday that they were all due to be released later that day.

Analysts said it was the most defiant protest since

the ruling junta took power after crushing pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988.

Two American tourists who were staying at a hotel about 500 metres south of that demonstration, said that on Saturday evening, armed troops lined the road and were billeted at locations including private houses.

Phone lines were cut and security was tight for both residents and foreigners, they said.

Access was still blocked into the area of the protest Sunday, with barbed-wire lined barricades manned by small contingents of police and troops on every approach road.

Meanwhile, other campuses remained accessible and were peaceful Sunday, with no reported protests.

A contingent of police with rattan shields and batons were posted near the centre of student activism in Rangoon — the Yangon Institute of Technology — but traffic was allowed to pass.

On Saturday evening, about 150 students staged a demonstration outside another campus for about one and half hours, before re-

turning to their hostels voluntarily, witnesses said.

Official Burmese Radio reported Saturday that military authorities had met in Rangoon with senior professors from all of the city's universities following student protests.

About 1,000 people took part in the protest that ended Saturday morning and some 800 had staged a march for student rights through the city at the start of the week.

The protesters' key demand is the formation of a union — which has been forbidden in Burma since the military took power in 1962. Students have ambitions for it to be a nationwide organisation with representatives from different ethnic groups in Burma.

"A little political opening could ease the situation, but the government fears it could be destabilising," Kyi Maung, co-vice chairman of the main opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) told AFP Sunday.

He said that although the NLD, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, had no direct connection with the student movement, it sympathised with their aims.

19 apply to stand in Chechen polls

MOSCOW (R) — The Central Electoral Commission in Russia's rebel region of Chechnya said Sunday that 19 would-be candidates had applied to stand in next month's presidential election.

ITAR-TASS news agency quoted the head of the Electoral Commission as saying that rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, Premier Aslan Maskhadov and field Commander Shamil Basayev, whose fighters held hundreds of hostages for a week in the Russian town of Budennovsk last year, were among the hopefuls.

The 19 now have 10 days to present petitions of support signed by at least 10,000 voters to be registered as candidates for the Jan. 27 election.

TASS said Saturday that Commander Maskhadov, one of the strongest candidates, had already raised 60,000 signatures.

Separatist leaders called the polls for a president and

a parliament after signing a peace deal with Moscow on Aug. 31 that ended 21 months of fighting in the southern region which claimed tens of thousands of lives.

Russia, which sent troops in December 1994 to quell Chechnya's independence bid, withdrew most of its forces from the region under the peace deal, leaving Chechnya under rebel control.

President Boris Yeltsin has ordered the withdrawal of Russia's last remaining troops before the election.

The rebels, for their part, have agreed to put off by five years a decision on the region's future political status. But they make little secret that they want independence.

Russia rules out granting full independence to Chechnya.

Mr. Yeltsin's envoy to Chechnya, Ivan Rybkin, who visited the region Friday, said in a television in-

terview Saturday that preparations for the elections were progressing smoothly.

But Russia's leading human rights campaigner Sergei Kovalev said he was worried about a lack of preparation for the polls and called for their postponement.

Mr. Kovalev told Interfax News Agency Saturday that it would be "Unbelievably difficult to fit elections into the planned time span while ensuring that they remained fully legitimate" and suggested they be delayed by a month or more.

Political analysts say that voting by some 400,000 refugees, who fled Chechnya during the war, would pose another problem for the polls.

Most refugees, many of whom are staying with relatives in neighbouring Russian regions, have no papers to prove that they lived in Chechnya before the conflict.

Kazakhs hold anti-government protest

ALMATY (R) — About 1,500 demonstrators in the Kazakh capital Almaty symbolically burned paper bunnies Sunday to vent their anger at government policies in a rare display of public protest in the former Soviet republic.

"President (Nursultan) Nazarbayev's credit with the people is finished," a trade union leader boomed over a loudspeaker.

"Finished finished" the crowd cried in response, many of them carrying soviet-era red flags.

Placards with the words "salaries," "pensions," "free press" and "democracy" were set on fire in front of Almaty's imposing Academy of Sciences building of yellow stucco. The ashes were placed in a small cardboard coffin.

The demonstration, called by the opposition movement Azamat (Citizen), was allowed by the government, a rare occurrence in the oil-rich country.

Former Communist Party boss Nursultan Nazarbayev, up for reelection in 2000, rules the country five times the size of France with few checks to his substantial executive powers. He tolerates some dissent.

The security forces' presence was low key. "It's peaceful, there are no problems," said one officer.

Leonid Salomin, the gruff leader of Kazakhstan's independent trade union and a member of Azamat, complained: "There are not very many people. There is great apathy among the people, they do not believe in themselves any more."

But patience is running short among the 16.9 million population with market economic reforms which have enriched a few but which have impoverished the majority.

The country's payments crisis means few receive their meagre salaries, or pensions on time, if at all. Supplies of gas and electricity are regularly cut off, a potential killer where winter temperatures can drop to minus 40 degrees Celsius (minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit).

Besides a few fringe political groups, like the anarchists waving a jolly roger and a placard declaring "capitalism — dung," most demonstrators were the old who have suffered most in the economic transition.

Americas sign action plan for sustainable development

SANTA CRUZ, Bolivia (AFP) — Representatives from 28 countries participating in a hemispheric summit here signed Sunday the first action plan that outlined steps toward sustainable development.

The plan, signed late Saturday, comprises 65 initiatives aimed at solving the hemisphere's "most pressing problems," by eradicating poverty while protecting the environment.

U.S. Vice-President Al Gore, Argentine President Carlos Menem and Brazilian President Fernando Cardoso signed the document prior to leaving before the end of the day's debates, conferences and speeches.

The 65 initiatives fall under various categories, including: health and education, sustainable agriculture and forestry, sustainable cities and communities, energy and minerals, and water resources and coastal regions.

The document also calls for institutional arrangements, financing, science and technology transfer and public sector participation.

On opening the two-day summit, Bolivian President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada said the Americas should commit themselves to sustainable development through an international treaty.

"This miracle will be possible if the political will exists to maintain democratic and economic stability and to attain high levels of development... with social justice and justice for the environment," Mr. Sanchez de Lozada told government leaders.

"We have seen Asia, the great example of how countries can reach amazing growth rates with liberalisation policies, but we know the social and environmental cost in Asia has been high, which is absolutely unacceptable," he said.

He called for a treaty to be signed by all the region's countries by 2005, the same year the hemisphere is due to reach an agreement on free trade.

Mr. Gore, for his part, opened the summit saying free trade was compatible with sustainable development and saying that the private sector was the key to success.

"The private sector is and will remain the main engine of sustained development," he said.

Mr. Gore had been expected to shake up the regional meeting with a counter-proposal to the summit declaration drafted by diplomats, but did not do so.

Inter-American Development Bank President Enrique Iglesias pledged to invest \$10 million in sustainable development projects throughout Latin America over the next three years.

The Bolivian president was host to his counterparts from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Suriname for the two-day summit.

Notably absent were U.S. President Bill Clinton, Mexico's Ernesto Zedillo, Colombia's Ernesto Samper and Rafael Caldera of Venezuela, who all sent representatives.

The meeting was a follow-up to the 1994 summit of the Americas hosted by Mr. Clinton in Miami, Florida, which set the stage for a free trade agreement from Alaska to Tierra Del Fuego by 2005.

The summit meeting opened two hours late because Mr. Gore's plane had to be rerouted to the central city of Cochabamba due to torrential rains.

The European Union, Japan, France, Spain, Russia and India also sent observers.

Mother Teresa suffers setback

CALCUTTA (AFP) — Mother Teresa suffered a slight setback Sunday forcing doctors to abandon attempts to correct her irregular heartbeat, a hospital spokesman here said.

"Mother Teresa suffered a slight setback today and attempts at cardioversion have been put on hold indefinitely," said A.K. Chatterjee, the administrator at the B.M. Birla Heart Institute.

"As things stand now her release (from hospital) before the next weekend is highly unlikely," Mr. Chatterjee said, without specifying the nature of the setback.

The 86-year-old Roman Catholic nun was admitted to the institute for spe-

cialised treatment on Nov. 22 after heart failure.

The hospital in a statement said: "Mother Teresa's condition is not stable as yet. She continues with chest congestion due to bronchial pneumonia inspite of aggressive respiratory and antibiotics therapy."

The medical bulletin said the missionary's renal function had normalised but the irregular heartbeat persisted despite life-saving surgery on Nov. 29.

"Mother Teresa is still not out of danger and physicians remain concerned," the brief bulletin added.

Mother Teresa Saturday resumed her missionary work within the confines of the hospital.

The Nobel laureate met a group of nuns from her Missionaries of Charity order and gave them work-related instructions for the first time since she was admitted to the hospital.

The frail Albanian-born missionary, known as the "saint of the gutters" for her work in the slums of Calcutta has been pressing doctors to let her go home Sunday and work among the sick and destitute.

It is the third time Mother Teresa has been hospitalised since August, when she had to be revived by shock treatment after her heart stopped beating for almost two minutes.

India expects warmer ties with China

WASHINGTON (R) — Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda said Chinese President Jiang Zemin in their meeting in New Delhi last week categorically denied selling nuclear weapons-related equipment to Pakistan, the Washington Post reported.

In an interview with the daily published Sunday, Mr. Gowda predicted the Chinese leader's visit would create "a new atmosphere" and "warm up our relationship."

Mr. Jiang's visit to India, the first by a Chinese president, concluded with an agreement that aimed to reduce tension along their border and could lead to weapon and troop cut-backs.

"The preliminary discussions that we had gave a good message — cooperation and a constructive approach," Mr. Gowda said. "We talked about building up our trade and restoring our relationship."

Mr. Gowda told the newspaper Mr. Jiang had made it "very clear" that there was no question of China providing any nuclear weapons to Pakistan.

Asked if he thought there had been missile sales and other transfers of weapons technology in the past, Mr. Gowda replied: "He (Jiang) made it categorically clear that they have not sold any arms that could be used against India. That is what he said."

"He categorically made that statement," the prime minister added.

Recent media reports have said Beijing sold nuclear weapons-related equipment to Pakistan, in breach of U.S. and global arms control pacts. Both sides have denied this.

India and Pakistan, born out of a bloody partition during independence from Britain in 1947, have fought three wars.

Gowda said he wanted to maintain a good relationship with Pakistan and had written to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto before her ouster a month ago to suggest "a dialogue be started."

"But because of the internal problems in Pakistan, nothing happened," he said.

Mr. Gowda told the post he had invited President Bill Clinton to visit India.

He gave no date for Mr. Clinton's visit but said: "We are eagerly waiting for him. When he comes to India, we will give him a red-carpet reception."

Taiwan's foreign minister, air force chief on secret European visits

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwan's foreign minister and air force commander are making secret visits to Europe, sources and reports said here Sunday, in a move expected to anger China.

Foreign Minister John Chang is secretly visiting Belgium following an unsuccessful trip to South Africa to persuade the government there to maintain diplomatic ties with Taipei, a Foreign Ministry source told AFP.

And Taiwan Air Force Commander-in-Chief Huang Hsien-Jung is making a surprise unpublicised visit to France — a visit linked to Taipei's purchase of advanced weapons and aircraft from French firms, the leading China Times newspaper reported here Sunday.

"The foreign minister has flown to Belgium and will return here in the next several days," the ministry source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

He said Mr. Chang decided to visit Belgium while in South Africa, from where he was originally scheduled to return to Taipei Sunday.

The source declined to say whether Mr. Chang would visit other European countries or if the trip was linked

to Taiwan's bid for a higher international profile.

"The minister will hold a press conference after returning to Taipei. You can ask him then," he said.

Mr. Chang quietly left South Africa late Friday, ahead of his scheduled departure, after failing to convince Pretoria to switch official ties from Taipei to Beijing.

Neither Belgium nor the European Union, which is largely centred in Brussels, maintain formal ties with Taiwan and each officially recognises Beijing as the legitimate government of China.

Taiwan's United Daily News reported Sunday that Mr. Chang had flown to Brussels via Zurich, Switzerland, arriving in the Belgian capital Saturday morning.

The newspaper quoted Mr. Chang as saying he would visit other European countries after his stay in Belgium, but all the visits would be of a private nature.

Taiwan's China Times daily, meanwhile, said air force chief Huang left for France on Dec. 3 and was expected to return some time this week.

Quoting unnamed sources,

it said the visit coincided with the delivery of the first batch of 960 French-made air-to-air Mica missiles to Taiwan.

It said Gen. Huang would observe the production of Mirage 2000-5 fighters due to be delivered to Taiwan, which has ordered 60 of the jets.

The report said the missiles, ordered from French manufacturer Matra in a deal worth \$1.9 billion, would be held in storage until the arrival of the Mirage fighters for which they were designed. The Mirage deal caused a serious rift between Beijing and Paris and led to China ordering the closure of the French consulate in the southern city of Guangzhou in 1992.

Taiwan has also ordered 400 Mistral surface-to-air missile from the France and Taiwan pilots and instructors have been sent there for training.

The Defence Ministry declined to comment on the report and no other details of Gen. Huang's visit were given.

A similarly secretive visit by Taiwanese Vice President Lien Chan to the UK-raine in mid-August caused a serious rift between Kiev and Taipei's arch-rival, Beijing.

'Nixon urged audits of Jewish contributors'

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Newly-released tapes show President Richard Nixon pushed for tax audits of wealthy Jewish contributors to his Democratic rivals, the San Francisco Examiner reported in its Sunday editions.

The Examiner said the revelation was contained in more than 200 hours of recently-released Nixon White House tapes.

Nixon, who resigned in 1974 after being implicated in a cover-up of a break-in at Democratic National Committee Headquarters in the Watergate Building, had a hidden system installed to record his conversations.

The conversations took place in September 1971 when Mr. Nixon was worried about his reelection prospects, the Examiner said in a copyright story.

In a Sept. 8, 1971, meeting with domestic policy chief John Ehrlichman, the Examiner quoted Nixon as saying: "John, we have the power. Are we using it now to investigate contributors to (defeated 1968 Democratic candidate) Hubert Humphrey, contributors to (then Democratic presidential contender Edmund) Muskie — the Jews, you know, that are stealing in every direction?"

"Are we going after their tax returns? ... I can only hope

that we are, frankly, doing a little persecuting," he said.

Five days later, during a meeting with Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman, Nixon said: "Now here's the point, Bob, please get me the names of the Jews. You know, the big Jewish contributors to the Democrats," he said. Using an expletive to refer to the contributors, he asked to have some of them investigated.

A day later, meeting with Haldeman and political aide Charles Colson, Nixon is quoted as asking: "What about the rich Jews? The IRS is full of Jews, Bob." Later, he added: "Go after 'em like a son of a bitch."

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Model needs strengthening

BAHRAIN'S BOYCOTT of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit which convened in Qatar Saturday can only be viewed as a setback to the desired unity of the Arab Gulf states. After these states successfully grouped themselves in a useful alliance in 1981, other regions in the Arab World looked at the GCC experiment with hope. They saw in it a concrete step towards finding joint mechanisms through which Arab countries can work to serve their collective interest.

It was therefore displeasing to see the only Arab region that was able to strike a common cord among its members giving way to disputes that have so far eluded resolution.

What divides Qatar, the host to the summit, and Bahrain is their territorial dispute over the Hawar islands in the Gulf waters. Given the level and strength of bonds among the GCC member countries, territorial quarrels between them should never be allowed to get out of proportion. The dispute can be settled through peaceful negotiations as more serious issues like the occupation of Arab lands by foreign powers receive more attention.

But instead of focusing on the real problems facing the GCC countries, such as the United Arab Emirates' dispute with Iran, time and effort are being wasted on less significant issues that have no direct bearing on the challenges facing the area.

One of these urgent problems that need consensus is the problem of Iraq and its suffering people. Time will come when Iraq will have to be reintegrated into the Arab fold and now is the moment to articulate the necessary plans for that eventuality. There is, of course, a great deal more that Baghdad has to do before it can allay the anxieties of the GCC countries after it had invaded and occupied Kuwait in 1990. But the Gulf countries must take the initiative that will bring an end to the isolation and marginalisation of Iraq.

Yemen's application during the summit to join the GCC is also an important issue and a good sign that despite its inner conflicts the GCC is still a desirable grouping to join. The size of Yemen, its strategic location and its huge human and natural resources make its admission into the GCC an asset. It is true that the existing rules governing membership in the GCC do not automatically open the door for other Arab countries to join. Yet, the overriding principles and guidelines on which the GCC was established in the first place are more than sufficient to extend membership to Yemen. Outstanding differences that may exist between any GCC countries and Yemen will have a better chance of resolution once Sanaa is incorporated into the Arab Gulf club.

The fact that some Arab Gulf states, notably the UAE and Qatar, are supportive of Yemen's quest for membership is a good start that hopefully will lead to its successful integration in the grouping.

Unlike the Arab Cooperation Council and the Maghreb Union, the GCC has so far shown it is one of the best experiments in Arab unity. We therefore hope that the council will weather all the storms facing it, close ranks and join the other Arab states that strive for renewed Arab solidarity in these trying times.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

JORDAN, WHICH has granted Benjamin Netanyahu all the time he needed and all the chance to prove his credibility as a man of peace as he has promised, now feels disappointed and it has all the reasons to be so, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. When still fresh in his position as prime minister, following the general elections, Mr. Netanyahu promised that he would honour the peace accord as his predecessor Menahem Begin had done when he pulled out Israeli settlers and forces from all of Sinai and concluded a final peace treaty with Egypt, said the paper. It said not only does Mr. Netanyahu declare openly now that he does not intend to give up the Syrian and Lebanese territories occupied in the 1967 and 1982 wars, he has also defiantly declares that Israel will retain the Jordan Valley strip which belongs to the Palestinians as a part of Israel's lands for ever, added the paper. It said that Jordan's frustrations with Mr. Netanyahu's policies and behaviours were explicitly expressed by King Hussein in his recent statement to the British Broadcasting Corporation when he expressed fear that the whole Middle East is now facing serious danger and the renewal of hostilities, said the paper. It charged that the present Israeli government's stand is impeding the peace process with the Palestinians, and its policies, which consecrate hostilities, are bound to open the door wide for violence and wide-scale conflict.

A WRITER for Al Doustour tackled the question of unemployment, and cited the Ministry of Labour's recent attempts at fixing minimum wages for workers as only part of a solution to the problem. Taher Adwan said in the private sector, the fixing of minimum wages is theoretically sound but practically not easy to apply, because there is too much supply of workers, especially professionals, like engineers, and little demand by employers. This situation gives the employer the chance to impose his will on the employees, like, for instance, forcing them to sign pay slips showing that they received pay more than they really did, he charged. The writer said the process of replacing non-Jordanian workers with local job seekers is also not an easy task since most job seekers are still under the influence of obsolete traditions and social beliefs that make them shun manual work which is currently taken up by foreign workers. He said social influences make job seekers refuse to work as janitors, night watchmen, gas stations assistants and other jobs which might be earning them more than any clerical job if found.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Figuring the budget and the expected budget

IT IS that time of the year when the budget has to be presented by the government and ratified by the Parliament. Fortunately, the present budget can be described as moderate, with the austerity measures being compensated almost fully by optimism about the state of the economy, especially since there are no foreseeable new taxes in 1997.

The government draft budget for 1997, which was announced last week, with total expenditures posted at JD 1,916.0 million, represents 33.2 per cent of the expected GDP, which is estimated to reach JD 5,770 million next year. The draft budget provides an 11.1 per cent increase over last year's budget, which is significantly higher than a previously planned budget increase of 6.3 per cent, according to the 1993-1997 Economic and Social Development Plan (ESDP).

An increase in expenditures is always good news, provided it goes to the development of the infrastructure and the improvement of existing public services. Basically, the government needs to favourably view contractors that can provide quality services instead of the traditional view that contracts should go to the lowest bidder, the one whose bid meets the minimum requirements. Thus, the search for quality can be institutionalised to usher in the decade of a technically capable Jordan.

Since budgets can be cumbersome to comprehend for the non-accountant types (accountants are individuals with enough sense not to be economists), I have listed in the table below, in the second column, the most important items of the budget in order to try and make sense of the overall picture of the budget. The third column provides the expected budget for 1997, according to the 1993-97 ESDP, to provide a comparison between the draft budget and how the planned budget was forecast five years ago. The last column is a numerical comparison between the two columns. The numbers in the fourth column are generated by the second column and dividing the outcome into the entry of the third column and then multiplied by 100 per cent to obtain percentage figures.

Thus, we obtain a percentage deviation of the present budget from past expectations.

Item	Draft Budget (1996/1997)	Expected Budget 1993-97 ESDP	% Change
Total Revenues	1,860	1,904.6	-2.3
Domestic Revenues	1,691	1,756.6	-3.7

External Assistance	169.0	148.0	14.18
Total Expenditures	1,916	1,883.4	1.7
Current Expenditures	1,481	1,463.5	1.2
Capital Expenditure	435	419.9	3.5
Deficit Excluding Grants	-225	-126.8	77.4
% of GDP	-3.9%	-2.4%	62.5
Deficit including Grants	-56	-21.2	164.1
% of GDP	-0.9%	-0.4%	125

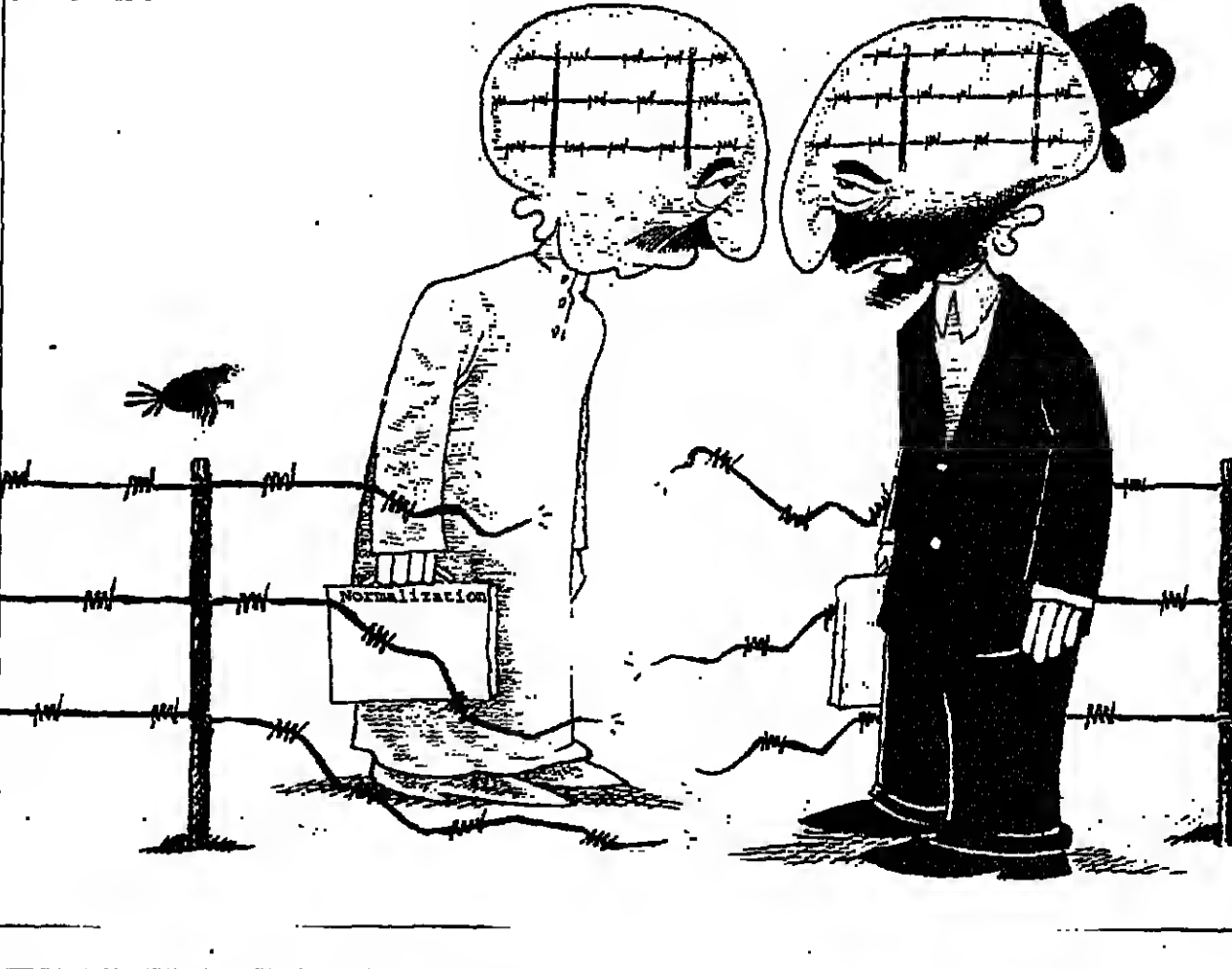
Clearly, the proposed numbers are close to those planned in 1992; however, when taking percentage changes or deviations as in the last column differences become obvious. For example, the deficit in the budget, excluding grants, is 77.4 per cent higher than expected earlier, and when foreign assistance is included, this deviation is 125 per cent.

Most importantly, the ratio of domestic revenues to external assistance in the draft budget is almost 10 to 1, while the ratio in the 1992 planned budget was almost 12 to 1. This means that in 1997, there will be slightly more dependence upon foreign assistance for government revenue than originally planned, as shown in the table.

The draft budget will be subject to debate in the next few weeks. However, the focus will be most likely on the distribution of government expenditures among social projects and the so-called social net and not on the overall size of the budget.

The good news is that the budget represents a slightly smaller percentage of the GDP than that of last year, growth is expected to rise to 6.5 per cent with increased trade and improved trade legislation, and inflation is expected to remain at under 4 per cent. And Jordan should have a good next year, if the projections prove as accurate as those of 1992.

M. KAHIL



West Bank 'ghettos' threaten uprising

Patrick Cockburn

NABLUS — Entering Nablus, the largest Palestinian city in the West Bank, is not easy. The only way to avoid an hour's delay at the Israeli checkpoint on its outskirts is to turn off the road from Jerusalem and drive for over a mile through muddy, newly ploughed fields. At one point, passengers have to get out and ford a stream. Cantonisation, the sealing of every Palestinian town from its neighbours, has arrived as a permanent policy. Husam Qadr, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council from Nablus, says the soldiers at the checkpoints — often just a few men with a jeep — blocking the three main roads into the city, have "a black book against which they check names. Only one car is let through every five minutes."

Khalil Shikaki, a Palestinian political scientist, in his office in the centre of Nablus agrees the city is being strangled, in part as punishment for its role in the fighting in September in which six Israeli soldiers were killed. He believes the only Palestinian response to the isolation of their cities, which "is killing social, political and economic life, is massive, non-violent protest."

Nablus, East Jerusalem and Gaza, the three main Palestinian cities, are all now isolated from each other. Zachariah Mari'er, whose family own a restaurant near the old Kasbah in Nablus, says: "I have not been in Jerusalem for four years, although it is only an hour's drive away." He stretches out his arms to illustrate the gap between what people in Nablus expected when Israeli troops withdrew last December and what has actually happened.

Unlike most businesses in the city, the Mari'er family's restaurant seems to be doing well, but Zachariah Mari'er said there was no new investment in Nablus. "Two of my brothers own shops and restaurants in

Tampa and St. Petersburg, in Florida," he said. "Earlier in the year, they came back here to start a business, but there was a 12-day closure. They said 'forget it' and went back to the U.S." He said he was planning to join them.

In theory, fixed checkpoints are banned by the Oslo accords, but Dr. Shikaki of the Centre for Palestinian Research and Studies believes that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, does not want to implement them. Under the interim agreement signed by the last Israeli government last year, autonomous cities and towns under Palestinian control would expand to include their hinterland of villages. The number of Palestinians outside Israeli control would jump from 300,000 to over one million. Cantonisation would not be feasible.

Dr. Shikaki argues that Mr. Netanyahu, by insisting that Israel has the right to send troops back into Hebron, is not looking for

more security but "an issue allowing him to freeze the Oslo process. He knows that the Palestinians will never agree to this because it legitimises re-occupation." But if the implementation of the peace accords is frozen, cities like Nablus will remain isolated ghettos.

In contrast with last year at the time of the Israeli withdrawal, there is an atmosphere of palpable hatred in Nablus. "Everybody here was pleased when the Israeli soldiers were killed in September," said Mr. Mari'er. Mr. Qadr says that last week Anwar Al Masri, a 22-year-old man hit in the face by a bullet during the fighting, was to be moved by ambulance to hospital in Jordan for an operation. Stopped at a checkpoint leaving Nablus it took him 12 hours instead of three to make the journey. Dr. Shikaki says Palestinians have no alternative but "to move to confrontation."

The Independent

Human Rights File

Algeria's reforms not concordant with international law

By Waleed M. Sadi

THE RECENT Algerian referendum adopting a series of constitutional amendments, including the barring of political parties set up on the basis of Islam, raises interesting issues on freedom of thought and religion.

First, though, the Algerian assertion that about 80 per cent of those participating in the referendum approved the constitutional changes needs to be addressed since it comes in stark contrast with the initial results of the 1992 Parliamentary elections that the Islamists were poised to win.

There is no apparent explanation for this dramatic shift in public mood unless we presume that the violence committed by Islamic militants caused a huge rift in the Algerians' support for the Islamic Salvation Front and caused the overwhelming majority of the people to shift from an avowed support for the Islamists to their outright rejection.

No doubt, the Islamists did themselves a great deal of harm by turning violent in support of their political platforms, but it is hard to believe that the Algerians made a 180-degree turn about on the role of Islam in their country just because the militant extremists turned bloody violent in the past three years or so.

Be that as it may, the real issue remains centred on the legitimacy of the recent changes in the Algerian organic law that culminated with the abrogation of religion as a basis for political action.

In order to find out whether the change is licit or not, one must turn to the one and only international guideline that finds expression in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and that Algeria has also ratified, over and above the proposition that the provisions of the Covenant have become part and parcel of the customary international law.

Article 18 of ICCPR states that "everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion". This right includes "the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief in worship, practice and teaching".

There is nothing in this context that seems to suggest that the freedom to manifest one's religion does not include the formation of political platforms on the basis of religion.

The only apparent limitation in this vein is the language to be found in paragraph 3 of the same article, that stipulates that freedom to manifest one's religion or belief "may be subject to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others."

These limitations have been conservatively construed by the Human Rights Committee which monitors the application of the Covenant in question and, as far as I can remember, they were never invoked to suppress political action on the basis of religion as such.

Article 20 sheds more light on the subject. Paragraph 2 of this provision states that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."

As I see the issue here, it is only when a religiously based political action advocates national, racial or religious hatred and incites discrimination, hostility or violence that it becomes repugnant and worthy of suppression. In other words, if a political party is founded on religion but does not advocate hatred or incites discrimination, hostility or violence, it must be declared lawful.

If the Algerian constitutional changes preclude in an absolute way the formation of political parties on the basis of religion per se, then they are contrary to the ICCPR. If that is the case, then Algeria cannot go as far as it did in outlawing political parties established on the basis of Islam and must declare null and void the last constitutional amendments that purport to go that far as to be repugnant to the letter and jurisprudence of the ICCPR.

There is no other Muslim or Arab country that has gone as far as Algeria in outlawing Islam as a political force. Not even Turkey, which is a secular state, has gone as far as Algeria in clipping the wings of Islam as a political force.

The current government in Ankara is a coalition between Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's Rafah Party, which is admittedly an Islamic movement but committed by law to respect secularism, the legacy of the late Turkish leader Mustafa Ataturk, and Deputy Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's secular Dogru Yol (True Path) party.

It is an uneasy alliance that may not withstand the test of time, but it is still a living testimony to the fact that even the one and only Muslim country which separates religion from state affairs could not disallow altogether the formation of a political party that openly advocates Islam as the basis for its political thought.

Against this backdrop and established precedents, Algeria's quest to dismember militant Islamic movements would have been better served by democratic means rather than by draconian laws.

"If the Algerians wish not to support Islam as a political force, as the published results of the recent referendum suggest, they will have ample opportunity to make their choice loud and clear whenever parliamentary elections are held. That would be the democratic way to address the issue"

If the Algerians wish not to support Islam as a political force, as the published results of the recent referendum suggest, they will have ample opportunity to make their choice loud and clear whenever parliamentary elections are held. That would be the democratic way to address the issue.

Features

Jordan Times, Monday, December 9, 1996

The undoing of Italy's avenging angel

By John Hooper

ROME — It is a story that could have served Shakespeare as the plot for one of the great tragedies of his middle years. Othello is the play that comes to mind: the great man, the conquering hero, brought down by the interplay of his own debilities and the pitiless machinations of his enemies.

For almost two years now, the Italian people have been watching as Antonio Di Pietro, the lawyer who dared to try to clean up public life, has been gradually but remorselessly demolished.

The story began four and a half years ago when Di Pietro, then a relatively obscure prosecutor in Milan, brought charges against a middle-ranking figure in the local Socialist Party. It was the start of an investigation that would lay bare a part of the web of corrupt relationships that underpinned Italy's old order.

Last week, the drama entered what is perhaps its climactic, but not necessarily final, act in a courtroom in the northern town of

Brescia. On trial, among others, are Silvio Berlusconi's brother, Paolo, and one of the TV tycoon's closest confidantes, Cesare Previti, who at different times has been Berlusconi's lawyer, a member of his cabinet and the organiser of his party. The two men are charged with blackmailing Di Pietro into resigning as a prosecutor two years ago, at the height of his power, as he was about to interrogate Berlusconi, then prime minister, about bribery claims. When the dossier of financial irregularities they are alleged to have compiled came to light, the former prosecutor was brought to court. The judge decided not only that the accusations against Di Pietro were groundless, but that they constituted a reason for indicting Previti and Paolo Berlusconi.

Di Pietro had every right to expect the hearing in Brescia would bring him revenge. What he got instead was repudiation of a breathtakingly unpleasant kind. His former boss, Francesco Saverio Borrelli, the head of the "Clean Hands" anti-corruption prosecutors, testified that at a

meeting to discuss tactics before Berlusconi's interrogation, Di Pietro said he intended to "break" Berlusconi. With a single phrase, his crusade against graft acquired the air of a personal vendetta.

Any doubts about Borrelli's desire to undermine his former subordinate were swept away in interviews he gave afterwards. Declaring he had no idea what had made Di Pietro stand down when he did, he added: "Of course, if he'd told us before what his problems were, we'd have been able to find a solution — perhaps a comprehensive psychotherapy."

The Italian political arena, in which many prosecutors are more than spectators, is one in which the cruellest insinuations are comparatively common currency. Borrelli's team is nowadays in deep trouble, its mission and methods questioned as much by Italy's centre-left government as by its right-wing opposition. The most charitable explanation of its chief's behaviour is that he was signalling he no longer wished to be linked with a troublesome erstwhile subordinate.

After Borrelli's testimony, two of his deputies went to the witness stand and corroborated his version. As news of their confirmation broke, a meeting of the parliamentary "friends" of Antonio Di Pietro was suddenly suspended. One of the organisers denied the meeting had ever been called.

It is a remarkable change from three years ago, when the nation admired the televised courtroom performances of a farm boy from obscure Molise. With his unfashionable southern accent and his uncompromising bluntness, Di Pietro was made for the role of exterminating angel.

Questioning Arnaldo Furlan, he spoke to him with such imperious bravado that the former prime minister started foaming at the mouth.



Di Pietro, brought down by his own debilities and the machinations of his enemies

What the public saw in Di Pietro was a man of obsessive honesty. It is said that when he left his previous post, as a district prosecutor in Bergamo, his last action was to have his secretary charged — with pilfering stamps.

What the public failed to see was that it would be a grave mistake to try to put his probity to political use. But it is an aching conviction among Italians that anyone who has become a resounding success in their particular walk of life is entitled to enter politics.

Di Pietro was determined to do so. Even before his surprise resignation, he could scarcely be up to his neck in graft. Di Pietro then compounded his mistake by attempting to deny their encounter, tarnishing his reputation for honesty.

What the episode illustrated was a contradiction that has hampered the former prosecutor's career in politics from the start. He is

naturally a man of the right. A police officer before he became a lawyer, he shares many of the opinions you would expect to hear aired in your local cop shop locker room. Until last week, he wrote a weekly column for the middle-brow magazine Oggi which once advocated castration for immigrant sex offenders.

Yet it so happens that the Italian right is led by Berlusconi, who has good reason for wanting to see the fall of Di Pietro and the end of the anti-graft crusade he initiated.

The circle appeared to square last spring when Di Pietro took up Romano Prodi's invitation to join his cabinet as public works minister. It seemed the ideal job — a practical task for a practical man. What is more, it put him in a position to pursue his war on sleaze, since much of it springs from the award of public construction orders.

Unfortunately, what came

to the fore was not so much his righteousness as the impatience and intolerance that have led critics to see in him the makings of an authoritarian populist. He particularly upset the Greens in the Prodi government with his plans for huge, ecologically insensitive, infrastructure projects.

But what led to his resignation was the appearance of new evidence to suggest that Di Pietro might not be as much of a straight-dealer as he seems. What it comes down to is that someone claimed, in a tapped telephone conversation, to have wriggled free of a corruption inquiry because he was Di Pietro's friend. On that basis alone, the former prosecutor has once again been placed under investigation.

Whether the charges against him are any more substantial than they proved to be last time is impossible to say. But what is quite clear is that, for as long as

this well-intentioned, if flawed, man continues to be dragged through the mud, Italian society will be unable to rid itself of the sleaze which engulfs it at every level.

The underlying message — that Di Pietro too could have skeletons in his cupboard — is a formula for something more than mere relativism. What it implies is that, if the very symbol of the Clean Hands campaign has dirty hands, then no one is honest, and to continue with the drive against corruption is not merely pointless but hypocritical.

It is a splendid argument for the hundreds of Italian politicians and financiers who still face possible trial and disgrace, but a profoundly worrying one for all those who believed that Di Pietro's investigation was the start of a "quiet revolution."

The Observer



Silvio Berlusconi wants an end to anti-graft crusade

Palestinians press for timetable

(Continued from page 11)

not so much by differences over Hebron as by the Palestinian demand that Israel commit to a timetable for further Israeli withdrawals in the West Bank as required by the Oslo peace accords.

"A summit must come after successful negotiations ... and so far there has been no agreement on Hebron or on other matters" including the overdue withdrawals, top Arafat adviser Nabil Abu Radda said.

"Contacts by the United States and Egypt are continuing, but until now there have been no positive results to end the crisis," he said.

The U.S. consul in Jerusalem, Edward Abington, met late into the night with Mr. Arafat on Thursday, Palestinian officials said, and Ambassador Indyk met the following morning with Mr. Netanyahu in a bid to close the gaps.

Israel has already withdrawn from all the Palestinian cities in the West Bank except Hebron. According to the interim agreement it is also to withdraw from rural areas around the cities in three stages. The first stage was to have taken place on Sept 7, with the second and third

stages after six months and a year.

The Palestinians say they do not trust Mr. Netanyahu to carry out the further withdrawal, and their suspicions have been heightened by his proposal that the two sides proceed directly to the negotiations on the permanent settlement.

The Palestinians are demanding a commitment from the Israelis to carry out the further withdrawal, with specific dates. Israel refuses on the ground that the timetable would influence the negotiations on the permanent peace settlement which are to follow the further redeployment. About 450 Jewish settlers live in Hebron, surrounded by 140,000 Palestinians. The Palestinians have rejected an Israeli demand that their police in the areas adjacent to the Jewish enclave be armed only with pistols, instead of assault rifles. Mr. Arafat, in his message to Mr. Netanyahu, demanded that the Palestinian police carry assault rifles, army radio said.

Last week Mr. Netanyahu said it was time for a meeting between himself and Mr. Arafat to settle the disagreements and sign the agreement on Hebron. The Palestinian reaction was cool, and Netanyahu's office is still waiting for a

reply, the newspaper Maariv reported Sunday.

Israel's Channel 2 television reported Friday that the United States has suggested a compromise in which Israel, in addition to its withdrawal in Hebron, would pull its troops out of the nearby village of Halhoul. In return, the Palestinians would be more flexible over security arrangements in Hebron, Israel on Sunday partially reopened a street in the heart of Hebron closed to Palestinian traffic two years ago, Palestinian officials said.

Opening the street has been one of the key Palestinian demands in the talks on implementing Israeli redeployment in the town.

Witnesses said Israeli bulldozers removed the cement blockades at entrances to Al Shuhada Street. But they said Israeli troops still barred Palestinian traffic. "We were informed by the Israelis on Saturday night that they would work on the gradual reopening of the street, and they would start by removing the cement blocks," a Palestinian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said.

Israel studies more settlements in heart of Arab East Jerusalem

(Continued from page 11)

eight-day Jewish festival of Hanukkah.

Ben-Rubi said the six militants were being held for questioning at an Old City police station and that the incident was closed.

Last week five Hui Ve Kayan activists were arrested trying to pray on the mosque complex.

But Adnan Hussein, director of the Islamic religious authority at Al Aqsa,

said about 50 people were involved in the assault on the mosque compound and that some were continuing their efforts to enter by various gates.

Iraq reaffirms Aqaba's status

(Continued from page 11)

ucts will be given to Brazilian producers."

Such an approach, he said, will meet a condition of transparency for all deals struck under the agreement with the U.N.

Iraq is ready to buy whatever is produced in Jordan as long as the prices and quality are satisfactory and are permitted under the agreement with the U.N.

Iraq has no problems whatsoever with importing Jordanian products and will continue to order from the Kingdom goods under the Iraqi-Jordan trade protocol, he added.

Similarly, he said, the Baghdad government will also encourage private sector importers in Iraq to buy Jordanian products.

During the meeting, held at the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) and attended by Transport Minister Nasser Lawzi in his capacity as acting minister of trade, ACI President Khalid Abu Hassan, and Amman Chamber

of Commerce President Haidar Murad, Mr. Saleh held an open dialogue with the Jordanian businessmen present, answering questions from the various industrial sectors interested in trade with Iraq.

He said the Iraqi accord with the U.N. provided for \$220 million worth of pharmaceuticals and \$170 million in vegetable oil, detergents and soap.

The accord also covers 1.2 million tonnes of wheat and 340,000 tonnes each of sugar and rice, he added.

Other items

include those related to the storage and distribution of food and medicine such as plastic bags and containers.

Mr. Saleh was expected to be received by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabarti and other officials during his stay in Amman.

Reuters adds: Mr. Saleh told the Chamber of Commerce at a lunch in his honour he was flattered by the Jordanian business sentiment that "reflects the strong Iraqi-Jordanian relations that go back a long time."

"I expect trade to increase and our aim is that it returns to its former levels. Iraq will give us preference," Mr. Abu Hassan, head of the ACI, told Reuters.

The pro-Iraq business lobby is lobbying for restoration of a \$400 million trade protocol they say was cut by half this year.

Most of Jordan's industrial exports to Iraq go through the protocol, under which Jordanian industrial goods are exchanged for Iraqi oil.

"We are for increasing

the size of the bilateral protocol to both meet Iraq's needs and allow its spinoff effects on all sectors of the Jordanian economy," Mr. Abu Hassan said.

A team led by the energy and finance ministers will go to Baghdad soon to discuss extra oil imports that may open the way for lifting the protocol ceiling. Iraq supplies Jordan with 75,000 barrels per day of crude

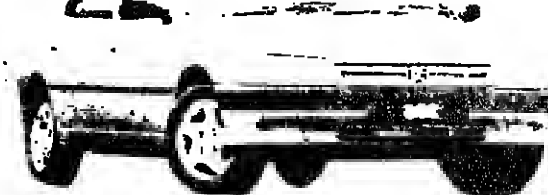
and oil products, a deal exempt from the U.N. oil embargo on Iraq.

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World trade ministers gather to agree free trade agenda

SINGAPORE (R) — Ministers from 128 countries gathered in Singapore on Sunday for a week-long conference aimed at ironing out differences and agreeing an agenda to push the world towards global free trade in the 21st century.

First steps to resolve disputes appeared in talks even before Monday's official opening of the first ministerial conference of the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation (WTO), with U.S. negotiators announcing progress in talks with Europe towards an Information Technology Agreement (ITA).

WTO Director-General Renato Ruggiero said he was sure the trade body's first meeting since it was launched two years ago to replace the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade will give a major boost to a wider opening of world markets.

However, members still hold widely differing views on many of the next steps they need to take to reach their free trade goal and on how to tackle social and political problems thrown up by the growing integration of the international economy.

The head of the U.S. delegation, acting U.S. trade representative Charlene

Barshefsky, claimed early progress on an information technology pact that would be a crowning achievement of this meeting, but cautioned that it was too soon to say whether final agreement would be reached this week.

"We are making very important progress," Barshefsky told reporters, but declined to give details. "We're pretty close on all the issues," a European source told Reuters. "A deal is within reach. We have to push very, very hard."

The two sides have been far apart, with U.S. negotiators wanting a broad agreement covering a wide range of products, estimated to be worth up to \$1 trillion a year in world trade, while excluding items such as fibre optics and photocopyers.

The European Union (EU) is unhappy with these exclusions.

Mr. Ruggiero has made clear he hopes to see firm movement in private ministerial talks towards pacts on freeing trade.

But he acknowledged there were difficult decisions to be taken on how to handle controversial "new issues" — such as trade and labour, investment, competition policy and government procurement — at the

heart of much North-South friction.

In a letter to Singapore Trade and Industry Minister Yeo Cheow Tong, who will chair the gathering, Mr. Ruggiero said Geneva negotiations on a declaration to be issued by the ministers provided a "solid base" for accord.

The declaration is to be issued on Friday and will be a key text guiding the WTO, created by international treaty at the end of the ground-breaking 1986-93 Uruguay Round of world trade negotiations, towards the new century.

The big trading powers — the United States, the European Union, Japan and Canada — have varying views on what should be in it. But key developing countries, especially in Asia, are determined to keep the "new issues" out.

The United States, with some EU support, wants the WTO to start discussing whether its rules should be adjusted to take account of the trading advantage some poorer countries gain from exploiting an unprotected, low-wage labour force.

They say the aim is to ensure that "core labour standards" — including the freedom to set up worker unions and a ban on children in the workplace —

are observed throughout the world.

U.S. and EU officials on Sunday told a Singapore meeting of a major global labour union body, the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, that unless the WTO could be shown to be addressing the question, public support in the West for free trade would evaporate.

Mr. Ruggiero told the ICFTU meeting he believed common ground could be found on the labour issue.

He told non-governmental organisations on the sidelines that they were important to the future of world trade because the momentum for trade liberalisation had become more dependent on public support, with NGOs in a middle role between people and governments.

"Your presence is important because you are a bridge, an essential link between what we are trying to accomplish in the WTO and what the public expects us to accomplish," he said.

"Trade has moved to the centre of public debate all over the world because trade is so central to people's lives, their jobs, living standards, their economic security."

Turkey and Iraq to mark reopening of oil pipeline

ANKARA (AP) — Iraqi ministers will come to Turkey to mark the reopening of a Turkish-Iraqi oil pipeline, energy ministry officials said Sunday.

The ceremony will be held in Turkey's Mediterranean port of Ceyhan on Dec. 14 or 16 to mark the start of the loading of crude oil onto tankers, a ministry statement said, without noting which ministers would come.

Oil is expected to begin flowing through the Kirkuk-to-Yumurtalik pipeline in the coming days, as soon as U.N. Secretary General Boutros

Ghali gives the go-ahead for the implementation of the oil-for-food deal.

The deal allows Baghdad to export \$2 billion of oil for an initial period of 180 days to buy food and medicine for its people.

The pipeline linking the Iraqi oil fields to the Turkish Mediterranean coast, was shut down six years ago when Iraq was placed under U.N. sanctions after its invasion of Kuwait.

U.N. monitors have arrived in Baghdad to supervise Iraq's limited return to the world oil market.

Four more experts, who

are currently in the area, will be stationed in Turkey to monitor the arrival of the oil.

The oil-for-food agreement is an exemption from the U.N. sanctions. The United Nations wants Iraq to fully comply with its arms monitoring terms before completely lifting the sanctions.

Turkey estimates that it has lost \$30 billion from the pipeline's shut-down. Its state-owned pipeline company BOTAS will earn an estimated \$55 million in fees from the limited oil sale.

Emerging economies urged to free up oil markets

GOA, India (R) — Oil consuming and producing countries wrapped up three days of talks on Sunday with calls for energy-hungry emerging economies to help themselves by dismantling barriers to energy investment and trade.

All sides endorsed the need for stable prices, but any unfashionable talk of intervention in the market remained vague and out of tune with the prevailing laissez-faire philosophy.

They remained divided over how to protect the environment without hampering economic growth.

Oil-thirsty Asia was in the spotlight at the gathering, the fifth such meeting since the 1991 Gulf war oil price scare.

Crude oil prices are bubbling close to six year highs, cheering producers but leaving emerging economies sick over widening trade and budget deficits.

Rising energy import bills have severely hit countries like India, creating a difficult choice of whether to pass international price increases on to their consumers.

"This is a dilemma for the entire developing world," Indian Foreign Minister Inder Gujral said.

But he added volatile prices can also cause headaches for producers, who are unsure when to invest or how much.

Two of the world's biggest oil exporters, Saudi Arabia and Iran, said supplies were assured for some time — if buyers can guarantee the right investment climate and

market access.

"Countries such as Japan, China, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, India, Pakistan and Thailand should note that they may enjoy security of supply from the Persian Gulf if they provide us with security of demand," Iran Oil Minister Gholamreza Aghazadeh said.

"Asia should strive to eliminate trade barriers with the Persian Gulf."

Western consumers told their Asian counterparts they could only ensure supply security by opening markets to free competition and allowing more foreign investment in their energy sectors.

"As regards security of supply Asia can do a lot to help itself," said Britain's Junior Trade Minister Lord Fraser. "Those countries which retain state controls can give more freedom to the developing and strengthening of the market mechanism."

Consumers want stable, lower prices, but producers are happy with crude now at \$24.50 for benchmark North Sea Brent.

"If the prices are not right the investment will not flow," said Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Secretary-General Rihwanu Lukman.

"Ultimately you will end up with very low supplies and high demand and therefore prices will shoot up. \$30-\$40 a barrel, and that would be even worse for countries like India."

While cheap new methods of extracting crude ensure world reserves won't run dry

any time soon, concerns remain over the huge finances needed to bring new oil and gas fields onstream.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has estimated the cost of meeting the expected rise in world oil and gas demand by 2010 at \$1.7 trillion, or \$120 billion a year.

Oil producers also took a swipe at high taxes levied on petroleum products by industrialised consumers, warning against stifling investment for bringing onstream future supplies.

Delegates agreed on the need to develop reserves of cleaner-burning natural gas. However, while abundant, it is far tougher to transport than oil and involves massive expenditures.

Delegates also agreed to meet again next year in South Africa and to consider the formation of a world energy organisation to collect data on demand and production and possibly coordinate a more unified global energy policy.

Norway's new Energy Minister Grete Faremo called for future talks to focus on how to combat global warming.

Concern over environmental damage from a rapid rise in fossil fuel use left OPEC producers and developing nations unmoved.

"Developing countries should not bear the excesses of the old polluting industrial order by curtailing their growth potential and energy demand," said Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister of Petroleum Affairs Abdul Aziz Ben Salman Al Saud.

Syria's olive production rises to 640,000 tonnes

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria's 1996 olive production rose to 640,000 tonnes that would yield 120,000 tonnes of olive oil and 85,000 tonnes of olives, Mohammad Karabeej, chief of the Olives Department at the Agriculture Ministry said on Sunday.

He told Reuters Syria was planning to export about 45,000 tonnes of olive oil and 10,000 tonnes of

olives. Syria's 1995 olive production stood at 430,000 tonnes that gave 70,000 tonnes of oil and 70,000 tonnes of olives, Mr. Karabeej said.

He said the government started to allow the export of olives, and olive oil for the first time in 1993 when production exceeded the local consumption of 75,000 tonnes of oil and

70,000 tonnes of olives. The government removed all taxes and fees on exports to encourage farmers to export, Mr. Karabeej said.

He said Syrian olive oil had good competitive features and exports now go to countries of the European Union, Arab countries in the Gulf and other states.

There are now over 56 million olive trees in Syria planted over an area of 434,000 hectares.

Mr. Karabeej said that olive plantation and production in Syria, like other crops increased rapidly during the last 25 years due to the government's plans to improve the agricultural sector.

Area planted with olive trees rose from 125,000

hectares planted with 16 million trees in 1970 to 434,000 hectares planted with 56 million trees in 1996. The 1970 olive production was 100,000 tonnes that yielded 19,000 tonnes of oil, Mr. Karabeej said.

olive plantation was limited to northern and western areas in Syria.

He said Syria was the world's sixth biggest olive producer after Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey and Tunisia.

Tunisia was expected to produce around one million tonnes of olives that would yield about 200,000 tonnes of oil.

Spain was expected to produce 2.5 million tonnes of olives that would give around 600,000 tonnes of oil, he said.

He added that the world's annual olive production ranges between 7.5 million and 11 million tonnes. Total area planted with olives in the world is around 10 million hectares.

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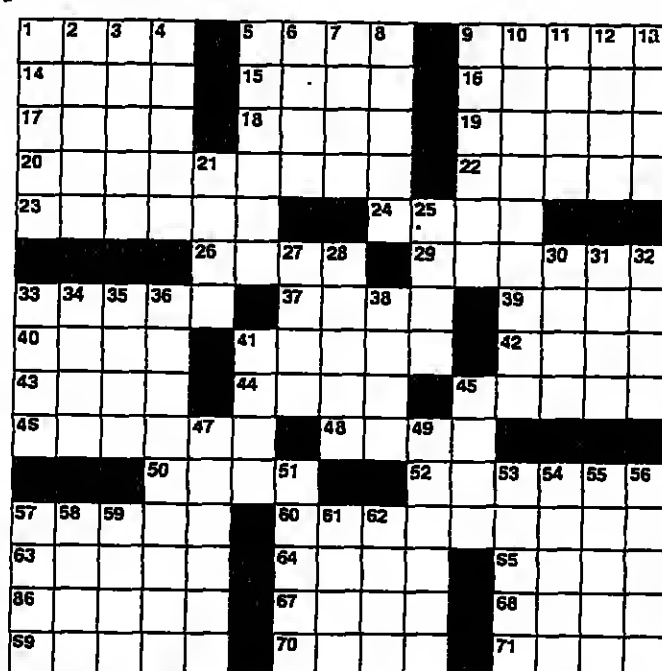
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FOR RELEASE NOVEMBER 27, 1996

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Jewelry stones
 - Clinches
 - Following
 - Leave out
 - Only
 - Welsh dog
 - Of — (recently)
 - Actor's part
 - Mountain nymph
 - Sideshow attraction
 - Clarinets
 - Heavy hammer
 - In — (happening simultaneously)
 - Delighted
 - Operative
 - Artie and George
 - Explosive sound
 - Do in
 - Designer Chanel
 - Hilo hello
 - Seize
 - Start for space or plane
 - Hollywood
 - Moore
 - Heard debris
 - Deepen a channel
 - Spongy
 - "Mama" — Elliot
 - Tree or insect
 - Vows
 - Sticky fir substance
 - Devout
 - "A Death in the Family" author
 - 8
 - Elicit
 - Cover with paint
 - Bus, course
 - DEA agents
 - Misses the mark
 - War vehicle

- DOWN
- Uses the links
 - Some computer messages
 - Bishop's hat
 - Knight's horse
 - Midwest country
 - Eccentric one
 - Pais miss
 - Fortunetellers
 - Future oaks
 - Weathermen's predictions
 - Paper source
 - Mild oath
 - Frees from
 - Breakfast fare
 - AZ city
 - Talented
 - Condemns
 - Jaded
 - Deep red
 - Spud's buds
 - Slew
 - Gardener et times
 - Farmland unit
 - Groundhog
 - Buckeye State
 - Citrus coolers
 - Upon
 - Talks
 - excessively
 - Armadas



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- NASA's domain
- Cougar's cousin
- NY city on the Mohawk
- Heir
- Have an opinion
- Candid
- Verdi favorite
- Guided excursion
- Mr. Stravinsky
- Close by

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get your talents today before new fellow associates and thereby you can gain the attention from a bigwig. Get busy later this evening and keep the promises you have made to your loved ones, so you can gain their respect.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Plan time today to do whatever you have promised to family ties. Don't get into and disagreements or you could find that there could be great tension between you all. This is a good time to go out on the town with friends.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't answer letters or communications speedily today, since you could provide the incorrect information which may prove to be disastrous. Later this evening make this time romantic with your loved ones and spend much time together.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) If you go to a financial expert today, double check the advice given to assure its accuracy. Have fun with hobbies later this evening and thereby you will relieve the stress which could be present from all business activities.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be careful in trying to solve a difficult situation in the morning. Make real progress through wise channels and you can consult with those in authority to see if you are proceeding in a successful direction.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Don't rush through puzzling difficulties or you could miss some important steps which could make your efforts successful or make all your career activities useless. Later this evening stay at home with your loved ones.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Make sure you understand today what a close friend expects of you and then you can handle it correctly, thereby you won't make a fool of yourself. Later this evening you can meet with knowledgeable people and gain much advice.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Follow the orders today of higher-ups so that you don't make any miscalculations which could be embarrassing in the days ahead. The evening is fine for relaxing and being with good friends who you wish to see.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get into a new enterprise today in a sure and confident manner which will make your efforts very successful. Follow the advice of an influential person, who has the ability to see through any situation and make the right suggestions.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Handle a responsibility early today and then you will have more time to relax with your loved ones. Talk your aims over with an expert in business matters and thereby you can gain the success which you desire.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) An outside fellow associate has much to say today which should be listened to and follow to the letter. Forget that worldly enterprise at this time and concentrate on matters concerning your loved ones and close friends.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Plan how today to get more accomplished at your regular activities and make this day quite successful for your loved ones. Come to a better understanding at career activities and seek the suggestions from knowledgeable people.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon.

\$370m joint venture to get off the ground

"We are working on joint venture proposals in the textile and pharmaceutical sectors," he said, without unveiling further details.

The trade agreement, which "will provide a framework for developing trade between the two

An Hui, manager of the BTV marketing centre. Since its November 1995 debut in Beijing, stations in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan and Weifang have also cottoned on to the lucrative idea. China's retail sales volume in the first three quarters of 1996 was 1,732 billion yuan (\$208 billion), an increase of 12.3 per cent over the same 1995 period.

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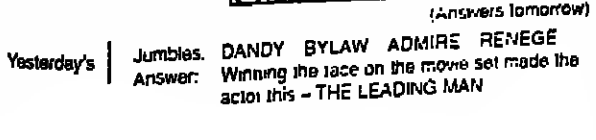
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Dettori rounds off golden year with another win

HONG KONG (R) — Frankie Dettori rounded off a golden year with another major international victory at Sha Tin Racecourse on Sunday. Dettori simply oozed confidence as he partnered Luso to a comfortable success in the international vase over 12 furlongs (2.4 km).

Much-travelled Luso, who paid around 2-1, beat the fast-finishing Australian raider Royal Snack by one and a half lengths.

Clive Brittain, who trains Luso at Newmarket, said: "It's down to the confidence of Frankie. He's on top of the world and doing everything right."

Two weeks ago Dettori won the Japan cup on Singpiel for another newmarket trainer Michael Stoute, the success coming hard on the heels of the historic feat of riding seven winners from seven rides at Ascot.

There was more newmarket joy on Sunday when First Island, trained by Geoff Wragg, won the day's most valuable race, the international cup, worth over \$487,000 to the winner.

Patiently ridden by Michael Hills, Wragg's four-year-old, a 15-8 shot, came from last to first to beat Australian challenger Seascay by three-quarters of a length.

First Island was crowning a brilliant season which also includes victories at Royal Ascot and Goodwood.

Hong Kong hopeful, Benji, trained by Patrick Biancone, faded from the start but faded to finished fourth.

U.S. raider Da Hoss, pre-race favourite after winning



Sydney jockey Darren Beadman, on Australian horse Monopolize, flashes the victory sign after winning the 1,400-metre Hong Kong International Bowl (Reuters photo)

the Breeders' Cup mile, pulled out. Mateo, another American horse, also failed a similar test.

McCoist sets scoring record with double strike

GLASGOW (R) — Ally McCoist became the Scottish league's record goalscorer with a double strike in five second-half minutes as Glasgow Rangers beat Hibernian 4-3 on Saturday.

McCoist first put Rangers level after 70 minutes when he just beat goalkeeper Jim Leighton to a cross from Dane Brian Laudrup and headed home to equal Gordon Wallace's post-World War II mark of 264 strikes.

Five minutes later, England midfielder Paul Gascoigne drove in an inviting cross and McCoist thrust out a boot to put Rangers ahead and claim the record of 265 for himself.

It was his 243rd goal for Rangers, with his other 22 coming during his spell at St Johnstone.

McCoist has now scored 16 times this season, and his two goals against the Edinburgh side could have a major impact on the premier division title race.

With Celtic losing 2-1 at Motherwell, Rangers are now eight points clear and on course for a record-equalling ninth successive title.

Yet before McCoist's intervention, Hibernian had threatened to spring a major upset, taking the lead through Keith Wright after 20 minutes.

Rangers equalised in the 34th minute thanks to Ian Ferguson but Hibs restored their advantage six minutes later through Darren Jackson.

However, McCoist's double blow and a fourth goal after 82 minutes by Laudrup effectively swung the game back to Rangers.

Celtic, who trailed 1-0, equalised through substitute Chris Hay with seven minutes left, only for Motherwell to snatch victory when Ian Ross slid the ball home with only seconds remaining.

Gullit defends his Italian imports

LONDON (R) — Ruud Gullit, whose cosmopolitan Chelsea team epitomises the changing face of English soccer, was in bemused and defensive mood on Saturday.

The London club's Dutch player-manager was baffled at how his multi-million-dollar side failed to beat Everton in the English Premier League, but at the same time defended his investment in foreign talent.

Chelsea drew 2-2 at home, leading after 12 minutes through their newest Italian import Gianfranco Zola, but needing an equaliser from his compatriot Gianluca Vialli to secure a point that left them seventh in the table, 10 points behind leaders Arsenal.

"We are all really amazed that the winner just didn't want to go in," said Gullit, who missed two great chances himself and saw Vialli and Zola hit the bar.

"It's incredible. It was exactly the same (in the 1-1 draw) against Newcastle two weeks ago and that's four points we have let slip."

"The team got everything right but the half just wouldn't go in and you can't coach against that. We just hope to break the run soon."

"Overall I am satisfied with the team's reaction in the second half when there was much more effort and you could see from the reaction of the crowd that they were happy with the way we played."

Chelsea's draw was achieved at a cost — Vialli pulled a hamstring near the end and could be out until Christmas.

He scored the equaliser with his eighth goal of the season after Zola, the club's 4.5 million pounds Sterling (\$7.4 million) signing from Parma last month, had put Chelsea ahead with his first.

Zola, renowned at Parma as a ball-juggling genius with impressive technical

skills, completes a trio of Italians at Chelsea, whose squad also contains a Russian, a Romanian, a Norwegian and a Frenchman.

Gullit dropped his third Italian, midfielder Roberto Di Matteo, for the Everton match but defended his investment in the three players.

"There's been a lot of discussion about the Italians coming to Chelsea and pushing out the British players," said Gullit.

"But they have made a major impact. They are something special for the premier (league). Everybody is very happy to see them play so I don't understand the discussion."

"If they play like this it can only be good for the premier league. They don't have to prove anything any more and I hope that now they will be accepted."

Chelsea's overseas contingent contrasts with London neighbours Wimbledon, whose almost wholly British squad have confounded expectations by taking the club to second in the table.

Manager Joe Kinnear paid heartfelt tribute to his players after seeing them extend their unbeaten League and Cup run to 18 matches with a 3-1 win at Sunderland.

"They amaze me every week with this incredible desire they have to do well."

"We are very proud of this unbeaten record and it is an incentive for us to keep on doing well because we keep on reading that we're going to get beaten. But we just keep on going."

Wimbledon are four points behind the leaders with a game in hand. Said Kinnear: "This is the strongest squad I've had in my seven years here. If we are in the same position with six or seven games to go I believe we would be the hardest team in the country to beat."

Big money at stake in Becker-Ivanisevic final

MUNICH (R) — Boris Becker has a chance to pick up one of the thickest pay packets of his career when he takes on defending champion Goran Ivanisevic in Sunday's Grand Slam Cup final — \$1.875 million.

But it will not be easy money for the German against the big-serving Croat who came back from two sets behind to reach the final with a 6-7, 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 defeat of Russia's French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov on Saturday.

Becker, who booked his place in the final after a straight-sets defeat of Britain's Tim Henman, was guaranteed \$250,000 for just turning up at the richest tournament in the game because he had won a Grand Slam this year — the Australian Open.

The winner of Sunday's match is guaranteed \$1.625 million. Ivanisevic has a chance to boost his earnings from five appearances in Munich to an astonishing \$4.425 million.

The statistics are in Becker's favour. The German has won nine of

their 15 clashes since 1990 but Ivanisevic won their last meeting in the Belgium city of Antwerp earlier this year which was also played on an indoor court.

After losing the opening two sets, Ivanisevic finally got his big serve and powerful groundstrokes into action against Kafelnikov.

The key moments of the match came in the middle of the decisive fifth set which had humour as well as some fierce exchanges.

Ivanisevic broke serve to lead 4-3 but Kafelnikov broke back in the next game to level.

After the Croat had smashed his racket in anger, Kafelnikov came back onto the court before the next game with two rackets. Ivanisevic joined in on the joke and both players then used two rackets to play a point to the delight of the crowd.

The action then became serious again and Ivanisevic effectively clinched the match with another break in the next game to lead 5-4 and then served out for the match after two hours and 21 minutes.

Henman's lucrative run at

the event ended because of the killer instinct of three-times Wimbledon champion Boris Becker.

The Briton, who doubled his earnings for the year by reaching the last four, put up an admirable display in front of 11,000 German fans. But it was not enough to stop an in-form Becker winning 7-6, 6-3, 6-1.

Although a 22-year-old Henman at times matched the German in terms of powerful serving, crisp volleying and accuracy from the baseline, Becker, seven years his senior, used every bit of his experience to excel on the big points.

"Being in that situation for many years you get a coolness (about the pressure). Sometimes you are already two points ahead," Becker said. "If you're a good player, you sense those moments and you want to make sure that you win those points."

"For the first set and a half, it really was a close battle."

For a while in the first and second sets, Henman looked capable of producing one of the best results in British tennis for decades. But he faded at the end. The Briton said Becker's consistency had been a major factor.

"It's a consistency thing. When I am playing some of my best tennis, I'm able to stay with somebody of his calibre," Henman said. "He's probably able to continue playing like that for four or five sets."

The British Number One took his leave of the tournament with \$431,250 in his pocket after the most lucrative week of his life. More importantly, he has gained invaluable experience for the future.

"He has improved already a lot in the last year and a half. He came from nowhere to be ranked now in the top 30," said Becker who will earn \$1.875 million if he wins Sunday's final.

"He apparently likes to play on a fast court so Wimbledon. One day he may win."

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Orthodoxi manage 73-71 win over Jazireh as Ahli beat Jalil 84-61 in Irbid

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Titleholders Al Orthodoxi needed all the luck, effort and perseverance they could manage to score a 73-71 win over Al Jazireh on the second day of the first division basketball championship playoffs.

A possible win would have given Al Jazireh the lead in the country's basketball championship for the first time in their history. They had a first half 36-30 lead which they later held at 65-61 before the match turned into a point-by-point match which kept fans engrossed in the action until the last seconds.

The result, however, promised an interesting second round of the playoffs in which the country's top three teams will be vying for the title and runner-up position.

But until that is settled Al Orthodoxi's win gave them the upper hand in the championship which turned into a three-way race for the title when Al Jazireh scored a 68-55 upset over former champions Al Ahli in the opening playoff game.

Al Ahli, who beat Al Jalil 84-61 in Sunday's other match now seem but a fraction of the team that ended Al Orthodoxi's 1976-1989 reign to win the championship in 90, 92, 93 and 94 and now seem likely to finish third for the first time in four decades.

Al Orthodoxi now top the four team playoffs after winning both their matches. They were led by veteran Hilal Barakat and promising star Fadi Saqqa who hammered Al Jazireh's basket with consecutive three-pointers to close the gap at crucial times in the highly competitive match.

Al Jazireh were led by Ma'an Odeh and new playmaker Mu'tasem Salameh who also had beautiful three-pointers and tried to make up for the absence this season of

Ghaith Ennabi. However, the team did not capitalise on the fact that their opponents carried a big number of personal fouls and lost many of the free throw attempts.

Unlike their first round encounter with Al Jazireh which Al Orthodoxi won 95-83, Sunday's match was a saw the lead alternate between both teams.

Al Jazireh took the lead in the 7th minute and maintained it through Ma'an Odeh's scoring as teammate Husam Lutfi was unsuccessful and key player Naser Alawneh surprisingly missed the match for personal reasons.

Al Jazireh led 36-30 at halftime but two consecutive three-pointers from Al Orthodoxi's playmaker Fadi Saqqa tied the game 38-38 in the 3rd minute of the second half giving the signal that his team was not about to give up the game easily.

Al Orthodoxi then led 47-42 and 54-49 with Barakat and Saqqa scoring. Al Jazireh's Salameh, Lutfi and Odeh then outscored their opponents 16-6 six points to take the lead at 65-60.

Al Orthodoxi capitalised on a series of turnovers to score six points but Odeh again scored for Al Jazireh to lead 69-68 with less than a minute remaining.

However, Al Jazireh lost possession and gave Al Orthodoxi's Munaser Abulhayyeb a chance to score and add a couple of free throws to lead 72-69 in the final 30 seconds.

Only a three pointer could tie the game and Al Jazireh's Odeh was fouled while attempting one as the match's result rested on his three free throws.

Odeh scored the first two but missed the last one and Al Orthodoxi went on to score another two to seal a precious win 73-71.

Heat surprise Bulls on Majerle 3-pointer

CHICAGO (R) — Dan Majerle drained a three-pointer with 1.9 second left on Saturday as the Miami Heat did what just two teams accomplished all of last season — they beat the mighty Bulls in Chicago.

Majerle's heroics gave the Heat their 10th victory in 11 games, a 83-80 triumph over the defending NBA champions in a showdown of Eastern Conference division leaders.

Michael Jordan, who scored a game-high 37 points, had tied the game at 80-80 on a jumper with 2:02 left.

But with time running out, Tim Hardaway took an inbound pass and penetrated the lane before kicking the ball back out to Majerle, who nailed the game-winning 24-foot jumper.

Alvinzo Mourning scored 20 points, Hardaway added 16 and P.J. Brown had 11 and 14 rebounds for Miami.

"This was a huge game for us," Mourning said. "We just outworked the world champions tonight, that's why we won."

Scottie Pippen scored 14 and Dennis Rodman grabbed 18 rebounds for the Bulls, who suffered only their second defeat of the season, falling to 17-2.

"There are no excuses," Jordan said. "They just had more intensity than us and wanted it more than we did."

In Denver, the red-hot Utah Jazz tied a franchise record with their 14th consecutive win, defeating the Nuggets 104-91.

Karl Malone paced the Jazz with 21 points, while John Stockton and Jeff Hornacek scored 18 apiece for Utah, which improved to 12-1 at home and remained one-half game behind the Houston Rockets for the Midwest Division lead.

Dale Ellis scored 19 points to lead Denver, which has lost six in a row. In Houston, Charles Barkley and rookie Manu Maloney each scored 21 points to lead the high-flying Rockets to a 123-108



Philadelphia 76ers forward Derrick Coleman (L) steals the ball from Houston Rockets center Hakeem Olajuwon during first half action. Houston defeated Philadelphia 123-108 (Reuters photo)

victory over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Maloney made 5-of-7 three-pointers and dished out nine assists despite playing on a sprained ankle as the Rockets tied Chicago for the best record in the NBA at 17-2.

Rookie sensation Allen Iverson scored 35 points for the sixers. Iverson compiled 97 points and 26 assists in Philadelphia's last three games, all losses.

At Washington, Glenn Robinson and Vin Baker combined for 80 points to lead the Milwaukee Bucks to a 126-118 victory over the Washington Bullets.

Robinson poured in a career-high 44 points and Baker scored 36. Sheman Douglas added 15 points and seven assists for Milwaukee.

Chris Webber recorded 26

Allan Houston added 14 points for the Knicks, while Lamon Murray led the Clippers with 18 points.

At New Jersey, Terry Mills tied an NBA record for consecutive three-pointers and the Detroit Pistons shut down the Nets for a decisive 95-69 victory.

In Seattle, Tony Smith's steal and breakaway layup with 4.3 seconds left lifted the Charlotte Hornets a 94-92 victory over the SuperSonics.

With seven seconds left, Seattle forward Sam Perkins tried to inbound from midcourt to Gary Payton, but Smith stole the pass and cruised in for the go-ahead basket.

Shawn Kemp scored a game-high 28 points for Seattle but was unable to get a shot off in the closing seconds. Gary Payton chipped in 25 for the Sonics.

Glen Rice led Charlotte with 22 points and Dell Curry added 21.

In Atlanta, Steve Smith scored 22 points and Christian Laettner pumped in 21 as the Hawks crushed the Toronto Raptors 101-75.

Mookie Blaylock added 15 points and IvanoJB. Williams, starting for flu-ridden centre Dikembe Mutombo, grabbed 15 rebounds for the Hawks, who won for the sixth time in their last eight games.

Walt Williams scored 17 points and Damon Stoudamire added 14 for Toronto, which was held to a franchise low in points.

In Dallas, Derek Harper came off the bench to score 20 points and Jim Jackson added 16 as the Mavericks posted a 96-83 victory over the Vancouver Grizzlies.

Chris Gatling chipped in 15 points for Dallas, which won consecutive games for the first time this season and held an opponent to under 100 points for the first time in eight contests.

Asian Cup

Mahalel thrusts Saudi Arabia into quarters

DUBAI (R) — Striker Fahd Mahalel lifted his goal tally to three in two games as he propelled Saudi Arabia to a 1-0 win over arch rivals Iraq Sunday and an Asian Cup quarter-final berth.

Saudi Arabia, beaten finalists in 1992 and winners in 1984 and 1988, were well worth their win

and looked capable of going all the way in the 12-nation competition. They now lead Group B with two wins out of two games.

Mahalel hit what proved to be the winner after 26 minutes, controlling a pass from Khaled Al Temawi, slipping his marker and firing a 20-

metre left-foot shot past goalkeeper Emad Hassan.

That strike added to the two goals Mahalel scored against Thailand in Saudi Arabia's opening match last week.

Midfielder Khalid Al Mowalad should have made it 2-0 four minutes later when, with the Iraqi goal wide open, he shot over the bar from six metres.

Qatani drain came close to equalising in the 34th minute when his shot from the edge of the penalty area got a slight deflection and hit the woodwork with Saudi goalkeeper Mohammed Al-Daeyea well beaten.

Iraq began the second half strongly and attacked in waves but found Al-Daeyea — one of the

Saudi stars in the 1994 World Cup — in fine form.

He made several crucial interceptions and saves, the best of which was in the 68th minute when he blocked a point-blank shot from Shihab.

Saudi Arabia suffered a blow in the 58th minute when central defender Mohammed Al Khiliawi had to be taken off on a stretcher with an apparent serious leg injury.

"There was no sign of any tension between Saudi Arabia and Iraq supporters as both sides put aside political differences between their two governments."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
BY TAMAM HIRSCH (Juni)
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EU special envoy assails Israeli settlement policy

Moratinos delivers Netanyahu message to Abdul Meguid saying Israel wants better ties with Arabs

CAIRO (Agencies) — Europe's special envoy for the Middle East, Miguel Angel Moratinos, on Sunday criticised Israel's policy of expanding settlements on occupied Arab land, and said it was "complicating" the peace process.

"The European Union (EU) has a very clear position about the settlements. It is a complicated issue that is complicating the peace process," Mr. Moratinos told reporters after talks here with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

The EU will be monitoring Israel's settlement policy, he said.

The Israeli weekly Kol Ha'ir on Friday reported that Israel's housing ministry planned on building 20,000 housing units in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and around Jerusalem.

The Israeli daily Haaretz also reported on Friday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had pledged to grant new building permits to settlers after the Israeli army completes its long-delayed withdrawal from Hebron.

Mr. Moratinos voiced hope for a breakthrough in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on Hebron in the "next days or weeks," warning however that efforts still needed to be deployed to "narrow the bridges" between the two parties.

He discussed with Mr. Mubarak the deadlocked Arab-Israeli peace process and "how Europe can be constructive in the future," Mr. Moratinos, who is Spanish ambassador to Israel, said.

"What I want to stress once again is that Europe does exist in the Middle East and it wants to play a complementary role to that of the United States in the peace process," Mr. Moratinos told reporters.

"I am concentrating on Europe's effective role and the attempts to bring closer the points of view of the two sides to solve the problem of the Hebron agreement," he said.

"We hope that some changes will take place during the coming days or weeks concerning the Hebron issue despite the presence of some obstacles now," Mr. Moratinos said. On Saturday Mr. Mubarak had talks here with

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on ways of "saving and pushing forward the peace process," Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said after the meeting.

"Egyptian-Palestinian contacts will continue in order to see what can be done," Mr. Musa told reporters, adding that there were many points which still needed to be resolved, especially concerning Hebron.

Mr. Moratinos, who was appointed in October despite objections from Israel, said he was hoping to "bring confidence building measures" to the region.

He arrived Saturday in Cairo after starting his maiden mission in Gaza on Thursday, where he met Mr. Arafat. He also had talks with Mr. Netanyahu and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa.

He voiced satisfaction over his talks with Mr. Netanyahu saying the Israeli prime minister had described him as "an ambassador of peace and he has asked me to be present, to come to see him, to be his advisor anytime, any moment."

Mr. Moratinos said he carried a "general, open message" between Syria and Israel stressing that both countries were committed to peace and "are ready to fulfill the commitments."

Mr. Mubarak also gave him a message for Israel underscoring Egypt's "commitment to achieve peace" and stressing the need to "convince the Israeli government to work for peace."

The official Syrian daily Tishrin on Sunday voiced satisfaction over Europe's role to promote peace in the region.

"The current tour of Mr. Moratinos (...) is a confirmation of the EU's wish to play an active and effective role to push forward the peace process," said the paper.

Mr. Moratinos also met Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid in Cairo and delivered a message from Israel to the Arab League in which the Jewish state called for closer ties with Arab countries.

"I brought a message to Mr. Esmat Abdul Meguid from the Israeli authorities that the Israeli authorities

want to establish good relations with the Arab World," Mr. Moratinos said after talks with the Arab League secretary general.

"The Israeli authorities want to have close relations with the Arab World and they want to work with the Arab League in the future if it is possible," he added.

Mr. Abdul Meguid acknowledged receiving the message but told reporters the 22-member pan-Arab organisation was more interested in deeds than words.

"We want Israeli words to be translated into deeds and we want them to implement the international resolutions pertaining to the peace process," Mr. Abdul Meguid told reporters.

He also announced that Mr. Moratinos would return to the region in mid-January. The envoy's current tour has taken him to Gaza, Israel, Syria and Egypt, and he is due to travel Monday to Jordan and then on to Lebanon.

Syria meanwhile accused Israel of preparing for an assault on its territory in comments published in a government newspaper.

"The Israeli military preparations and the state of alert of its army ... are nothing but a wide-scale aggression Israel is planning to launch against Syria and the peace process," said the newspaper, Al Thawra.

If Israel chooses war, "it would have catastrophic and destructive consequences," Al Thawra said. Tishrin, another government newspaper, accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of calling on the Arabs to adapt themselves to his policy.

"Adaptation, in the Israeli language, simply means relinquishing lands and rights ... Undoubtedly the Arabs would never adapt themselves to such a policy because peace is intricately linked to the full return of lands and rights," the newspaper said.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat accused Israel of massing troops on the borders with Syria, Lebanon and Egypt in an interview with the London-based Al Hayat daily published Saturday.

"This is a dangerous build-up and I told Arab officials about it," Mr. Arafat said. He provided no details in the interview.



PEARL HARBOUR ANNIVERSARY: A girl feeds white doves on Sunday at Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine as a symbol of peacemaking the 55th anniversary of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour (Reuters photo)

Israel absent from talks on displaced

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israel failed on Sunday to attend the first session in nine months of multilateral talks on the fate of Palestinians displaced by the 1967 war, officials said.

"Israel notified us last week that it would not attend this meeting for technical reasons. It did not specify these reasons and we find them unconvincing," the head of the Palestinian delegation Zuhdi Al Said said following the talks in Gaza City.

"This is an attempt by Israel to stall on the issue of displaced Palestinians and delay issues of the interim period into final status negotiations," Mr. Said told journalists.

From the Israeli side, foreign ministry spokesman Chaim Keren denied Israel's absence was due to any "substantive problem or any desire to avoid discussions or issues."

The session had been set to take place in Bethlehem but when Israel gave notice it would be unable to attend, "they decided to go ahead with the meeting anyway in Gaza," Mr. Keren said.

The Palestinian delegation head said the session was moved to Gaza because he had been refused permission to cross Israeli territory to reach Bethlehem, on the West Bank south of Jerusalem.

The session concentrated on "procedures for putting the committee back on track in the vital matter of displaced Palestinians," Mr. Said said.

The committee on the displaced was supposed to meet monthly after it was created by the 1991 Madrid conference which launched the

Israeli-Arab peace process.

But its sessions did not start until a year and half after Madrid and it has not convened since a March session in Cairo.

The committee deals with the return of Palestinians who were driven from their homes when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 and whose return is called for under the Oslo self-rule accords.

But Israel and the Arab countries have not yet agreed on a definition for either category or the number of Palestinians which would fall into them. Israel puts their number at 200,000, while the Palestinians say they number 800,000.

The separate issue of Palestinian refugees who lost their homes when Israel was created in 1948 is to be dealt with under final status talks which have been suspended since a symbolic opening session in May.

The Palestinian National Authority announced on Nov. 26 it would attend only talks dealing with refugees in protest against Israel's delay in implementing interim peace deals signed last year.

Palestinian delegate Said told reporters: "The Israeli absence creates worry among the Arab brothers in the region."

He said the Palestinians, Egypt and Jordan were meeting "as Arab delegations to coordinate and develop the work of the committee on refugees."

Mr. Said said that Israel, the PNA, Jordan and Egypt have agreed in previous negotiating sessions to carry out a survey of the refugees and start work on repatriating them.

NEWS IN BRIEF

8 sentenced to death in Algeria

PARIS (R) — An Algerian court condemned eight fugitives to death at the weekend for belonging to "an armed terrorist group aiming to spread death," the official Algerian news agency APS said on Sunday. It said the death sentences were passed in absentia on the eight on Saturday by the court sitting in Medea, 60 kilometres southwest of Algiers. Earlier this month, the agency said the same court had sentenced 23 people to death, also in their absence. They were accused of crimes including "belonging to an armed movement, undermining state security, taking part in premeditated murder, sabotage and arson of economic units and educational establishments."

Lebanon truce committee to meet

BEIRUT (AFP) — The five-nation committee monitoring a truce in South Lebanon is to meet Monday after Lebanon filed a complaint about Israeli shelling that wounded six civilians, government sources said Sunday. The truce committee — which groups France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the United States — will convene at 11:00 a.m. (0900 GMT) in the border town of Naqura, at the U.N. peacekeeping force headquarters, the sources said. Lebanon's Foreign Ministry called late Saturday for a meeting of the international committee to protest at an Israeli bombardment earlier during the day that wounded six civilians in the southern village of Kfar Tebbit. The shelling came in response to an attack by guerrillas on the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in South Lebanon which left one Israeli soldier dead and another wounded.

Sudanese militia frees Red Cross people

NAIROBI (R) — A South Sudanese militia released on Sunday three Red Cross people held in southern Sudan since their plane landed in the militia's territory by mistake five weeks ago, the Red Cross said. Australian nurse Maureen Worthington, American pilot John Early and Kenyan pilot Mohsin Raza flew to Khartoum on Sunday afternoon after intervention on the ground by U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson of New Mexico, a Red Cross spokesman said.

Iranian prisoners choose not to flee

TEHRAN (AFP) — A bus transporting 20 Iranian prisoners collided with two trucks in western Iran, but the inmates opted to stay in custody despite the opportunity for them to escape, a newspaper reported Sunday. The prisoners stayed seated in the bus until the police came to retrieve them, Kayhan said. It did not say if any of the passengers were hurt in the accident on a road in Lorestan province.

Pharaonic burial site found in Egypt

CAIRO (R) — Archaeologists have discovered an ancient burial site in Egypt's Nile Delta which was used in Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman times, the official Al Akhbar newspaper reported on Sunday. The daily said the 25-acre site was found in May in the town of Quesnah, some 100 kilometres north of Cairo, but was announced only on Saturday. The paper said archaeologists found jewels, gold foil, sarcophagi and clay pots in the cemetery, which lies 15 metres beneath the surface. Officials at the supreme antiquities council were not immediately available for comment.

Syria to buy six Airbus

DAMASCUS (AFP) — The Syrian Arab Airlines (SAA) has signed an agreement with Airbus Industrie for the purchase of six Airbus 320 passenger planes, the official Syrian news agency SANA reported Sunday. SANA said the agreement between SAA and the European Consortium was signed at a ceremony here Saturday night attended by Transport Minister Moustafid Abdul Karim Mr. Karim was quoted as saying that the first two planes will be delivered in 1998 and that the purchase was "an important development for Syria's aviation sector and tourism industry." He said new routes would be established with South America and southeast Asia and that flights to Europe and Arab countries would be doubled.

Iranian envoy to sue paper

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's former envoy to Tajikistan is planning to sue a local weekly for reporting he had defected and sought political asylum, the official news agency IRNA said on Sunday. Ali Ashraf Shabestari said he would file a lawsuit against Kayhan Havaie, the weekly publication of the Kayhan newspapers group, it added. He said claims by the weekly's managing director that he had joined the outlawed Mujahideen-e-Khalq organisation tarnished his image as well as that of the Islamic republic. He said "such unfounded claims stem from personal grudge."

Hamas considers 'more practical' position towards peace process

PNA allows group to organise rally, prompting hardline leaders to study changing approach

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — The hardline group Hamas is considering a "more practical" policy after the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) allowed it to hold a rare public rally later this week, a Hamas official said Sunday.

A PNA official said the authority had given the Hamas permission to hold a rally in the Gaza Strip on Friday to mark the group's ninth anniversary.

"They informed us in recent meetings that their position is to oppose the PLO-Israel peace accords in peaceful ways, and that they would not use violence," the official, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters.

Hamas officials said the self-rule authority's decision to license the rally was a sign of goodwill following its crackdown on the group in the wake of Hamas suicide bombings that killed 59 people in Israel last February and March.

"The rally will be held on Friday, Dec. 13, and we were given a licence to hold it by the Palestinian police, but we have held licensed rallies before," said Hamas leader Sayed Abu

Musameh.

"There have been contacts between us and the Palestinian Authority and we are interested in having good relations with the authority," he said.

"We want to put forward a more practical position than in the past, we want to be more practical concerning the nature of the current stage," Ghazi Hamad, another leading Hamas figure, told AFP.

Hamas has led a violent opposition to Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) self-rule agreements with Israel and conducted a series of anti-Israeli suicide bombings.

"The granting of permission (for the rally) is a positive signal and a sign of the improvement in relations between the authority and Hamas," Mr. Hamad said.

The rally is also to mark the first anniversary of the killing of Yahiya Ayash, the chief "engineer" of Hamas suicide bombings against Israelis.

Ayash was killed on January 5 in Gaza City by a booby-trapped cellular phone, reportedly slipped to him by Israeli security

forces.

Israeli security sources, cited by Israeli radio, said they were alarmed by the authorisation given to the rally, saying the PNA wants to signal to Israel that the "Hamas option is still open."

Mr. Hamad said it had been more than a year since Hamas had sought permission from the PNA for a rally "due the difficult circumstances we have been going through with the arrests of our members" by Palestinian police.

"But with the improvement in the atmosphere we decided to ask authorisation for the rally," he said.

Under Israeli pressure, the PNA launched a crackdown on militants following the February and March suicide bombings, which Hamas launched in revenge for Ayash's killing.

Hundreds of Hamas members were arrested in the crackdown but most have been released in recent months.

Ekeus in Baghdad

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Ekeus said last month he sent a letter of protest to Baghdad and passed a copy on to the president of the U.N. Security Council, "pointing out that Iraq had violated its obligations" under U.N. resolutions ending the 1991 Gulf war.

The U.N. Security Council on Friday "expressed the hope that current problems can be overcome" and called on Iraq to "cooperate fully with the special commission."

Edward Gnehm, the number two at the U.S. mission to the United Nations, said that "this is a pattern of behaviour that we have seen before and that we find inexcusable and unacceptable."

Iraq earlier this year blocked U.N. inspectors from inspecting suspected weapons sites claiming the searches were a violation of its sovereignty.

"We will respond firmly to Iraqi provocations," Mr. Gnehm stressed, warning Iraq against making a "miscalculation" as in U.S. intentions concerning the lifting of U.N. sanctions.

Mr. Gnehm recalled that Iraq would remain under U.N. sanctions despite the oil-for-food deal which is a temporary exemption to a crippling oil embargo.

Iraq expects to resume oil exports on Tuesday while Mr. Ekeus is here, although U.N. officials have not given a date for the resumption.

A small team of U.N. experts went to northern Iraq on Sunday to supervise Iraq's resumption of limited oil exports for the first time since 1990.

A U.N. source said four of the 10 experts who arrived in Baghdad on Saturday left to take up position at the metering station of Zakho on the Iraqi-Turkish twin pipeline close to the border with Turkey.

The other six, the source said, would leave for southern Iraq to inspect the export terminal of Mina Al Bakr on the Gulf on Monday.

Iraq last month agreed to U.N. conditions on partial exports of \$2 billion in six months to help it buy food and medicine to alleviate suffering of its sanctions-hit population.

COLUMN

Girl born to Britain's first 'surrogate granny'

LONDON (AP) — Britain's first "surrogate grandmother" has given birth to a baby girl for her own daughter who was unable to bear children, the family announced Sunday. Caitlin Langston was born Thursday at Dartington Memorial Hospital in northern England and weighed five kilograms, the family said. Edith Jones, 51, was implanted with embryos created from eggs from her daughter Suzanne and sperm from Suzanne's husband, Chris Langston. The first such case in which a woman served as a surrogate for her daughter was reported in South Africa in 1987. In that case, the surrogate gave birth to triplets. Not everyone approved of the operation. "This situation technically makes both the natural mother and the child of the same generation, it will surely cause considerable confusion to both children," a spokesman for the Catholic Church in Britain told the Sunday Telegraph newspaper.

Vampire cult mother says game was 'fun'

EUSTIS, Florida (R) — What started as a role-playing game for a group of teenagers turned into a cult of self-proclaimed "vampires," who cut their bodies, drank blood and now face charges of murdering one member's parents. The five teens, aged 15 to 19, have been extradited to Florida from Louisiana for the slaying of a Eustis couple bludgeoned to death in their home last month. The mother of the accused ringleader of the group told on Saturday of how she played a "vampire" game with her son and how she thought it was just fun and make-believe. But police say Sandra Gibson's son Roderick Ferrell, 16, became lost in a delusional world of "vampire" rituals and conspiracies that led to the horrific double murder of Richard and Ruth Wendorf on Nov. 25. Police believe the murder weapon was either an axe or claw hammer and that the deadly blows were inflicted by at least three different people.

Thieves steal tonnes of rice in Cuba

HAVANA (AFP) — An estimated 500 tonnes of rice have been stolen in Cuba's main rice growing province on the eastern end of the island, the Communist Party daily Granma reported Saturday. A recent police operation recovered 39 tonnes of the grain stolen in Granma province and several vehicles used in the robberies were confiscated, the newspaper said. Police discovered a truck loaded with 3.2 tonnes of rice in the neighbouring province of Las Tunas and another with 1.3 tonnes were found in a state-owned truck destined for Guantanamo province, apparently to be bartered. Every Cuban is entitled to a monthly quota of three kilograms of rice — a staple of the Cuban diet — under a government rationing system. More than 70 per cent of the grain must be imported into this cash-strapped nation.

Valuable painting stolen from Prussian palace

BERLIN (AP) — Thieves stole a valuable painting by 19th century artist Caspar David Friedrich by breaking into a Prussian palace where it hung and then eluding guards, police said Saturday. Snatched in the pre-dawn break-in at Charlottenhof Palace in nearby Potsdam was the oil painting "View from a Harbour," said police spokesman, who put the value of the work at several million marks. It is one of the best-known works of Friedrich, a romantic painter of landscapes. Alarms were set off when thieves smashed a window at about 2 a.m. But the crooks escaped with the painting before security guards arrived, police said. "View from a Harbour" was among many valuable objects that are kept in the Charlottenhof Palace.